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**THE
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MODERN MEN

FROM

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LONDON

EDWARD ARNOLD

1890

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INTRODUCTORY

THESE twenty 'literary portraits' from the series of 'Modern Men' appearing week by week in *The Scots Observer* have been selected and arranged with a view to variety of interest and effect. Thus, Mr. Arthur Balfour is contrasted with Mr. Parnell, Mr. Gladstone with Prince Bismarck, the *P.R.A.* with a painter, Mr. Lewis Morris with a poet, and Mr. Spurgeon with Mr. Augustus Harris; while Lord Wolseley serves as a foil to Señor Sarasate on the one hand and 'W. G.' on the other, and Dr. Keith may be compared to Mr. William Thomas Stead. They are the work of various hands, and they have all been subjected to revision; but though certain changes have occurred in the lives and fortunes of some

of their originals—at the time of writing Prince Bismarck (for example) was still the most powerful and conspicuous of living men, and Mr. Stead still edited an evening paper—no attempt has been made to bring any down to date. Their purpose indeed is not biographical but critical; and it is hoped that their interest is independent of history.

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THE RIGHT HON.

ARTHUR JAMES BALFOUR, M.P.

TO be known by epithets so variegated and strange as 'Miss Clara' and 'the Tiger-Lily,' to be the subject of comparisons that range between such antipodes as Cromwell and Castlereagh, to be held up to admiration at one and the same time as 'languid' and 'feeble' and as essentially and innately 'base, bloody, and brutal'—this, and this alone, were distinction enough, although its authors are no more than Irish members: a class of men of whom it has been said that they make up in adjectives what they lack in brains, and are never so apt to be offensive as when they are most afraid. Mr. Balfour, however, is distinguished on other grounds than this, and has other qualities than that of being a fruitful source of income to the gentlemen who earn their bread by writing for the Separatist press. At this moment he is the best hated and the best respected man in these islands; and recent as is his accession to public life, and young as he is in the practice of public business, he has already forced his worst enemies to the conclusion that for him to be the most powerful also is only a question of time. The truth is that it has become apparent, alike to those who hate

and those who applaud and admire, that he is a distinguished human being as well as one that has in him all the capacities that go to make (in the great imperial sense of the word) a statesman. Dr. Tanner has called him a liar and a coward. But that is only an Irish way of expressing that 'admiration of terror' which is the sincerest form of flattery humanity can know, and means no more than that Dr. Tanner and those who misbehave with him are exactly at one with those on the other side of affairs who are used to think of Mr. Balfour as the best bred Irish Secretary since Chesterfield, and the strongest Irish ruler since Strafford.

The Irish Office has been no sinecure these some years past; and when it was told among the gallant eighty odd who follow the lead of Mr. Parnell that Sir Michael Hicks Beach was presently to be succeeded by the polite and delicate Scottish Secretary there was great joy among them, for they believed that they would eat him up as speedily as they had eaten up his predecessors. Mr. Forster and Sir George Trevelyan had succumbed to them in turn; they had made short work of Lord Salisbury's first choice; and they promised themselves that they would make still shorter work of Mr. Arthur Balfour. The illusion was only natural. Up to that time Mr. Balfour had proved no more than that his manners were good, that his metaphysical training had done him anything but harm, that he had plenty of tact and resource, that he was prompt and skilful in debate, that he took himself and his duty with a certain seriousness, and that his point of view could be either practical or philosophical as experience ruled or occasion served; and it was

feasible enough—especially to those sanguine spirits who regard Home Rule for Ireland as certain and American dollars as the only clean and decent *fons et origo* of pure patriotism—that he would be easily relegated to his Berkeley, his Handel, and his golf. What followed is matter of history. Mr. Balfour did more than refuse to run away: he stood his ground and he hit back, and that with such deadly assurance and celerity that the common cry of persecutors with whom he had to deal knew not whether to be more mortified or amazed. He was found to be impervious to insult and to have a really heroic capacity for keeping his temper; it was seen that his grasp of facts was unrivalled and his courage unquenchable, that he was a master of dialectics, that he had wit and style and eloquence enough to furnish forth a dozen parliamenteers of the common pattern; above all, it was felt that the source of his inspiration was an austere and lofty sense of duty, and that his disdain of the antic heroes opposed to him was the outcome of not personal feeling but a vigorous, living morality. It was a tremendous discovery. It had been possible to baffle and to torture Mr. Forster; it had been easy to ravish the sympathies (such as they are) of Mr. John Morley; it had been still easier to unsettle the convictions and perplex the intellectuals of Sir George Trevelyan, and send him spinning round the compass like a weathercock oiled into wantonness. But here was a man who positively enjoyed the process of Secretary-baiting, who refused to be drawn except to scatter confusion among his terriers, who cared as little for the Uncrowned King as for the Healys and the Harringtons themselves, and was as capable of dealing

with Mr. Gladstone as with Mr. Biggar. It was a tremendous discovery; and it must have gone far to shake the belief of more than one good Parnellite in the existence of a personal Deity. And the worst was that far worse remained behind. Mr. Balfour, declining to sit and be baited, proceeded to carry fire and sword into the foe-man's country and to approve himself as resolute and skilful in the practice of administration as he was accomplished and fearless in the matter of debate. He was there to govern Ireland, and he set to work to govern it in accordance not with expediency but with principle. He stood for justice where others had stood for sensibility. He proclaimed the inviolable quality of law, and he went on to exact a return to that respect for law and that confidence in the authority of law which are the basis of society and (it may be) the chief conquest of civilisation. The effect of his action was not incomparable in its way to that of Gordon's at Khartoum. The nation—or such of it as was not drunk with sentimentalism nor bewitched with the magic of a certain enormous personality—awoke from the apathy into which a long acquaintance with the virtues of expediency for expediency's sake and the methods of individuality for the sake of office had impelled it, to the fact that here at last was some one who believed in nothing but the right, and in defence of his conviction was prepared to sacrifice all but honour. And behold! it was enough. That Mr. Balfour sometimes seemed to pause in his course to convict the Separatist leaders of saying that which is not, and of doing as none but the most self-righteous and immoral of men may do and live, was little or nothing to the purpose. These

achievements in jugulation were keenly enjoyed, no doubt; the Glasgow speech on Ireland took its place beside the Edinburgh speech on education; it was soon perceived that Mr. O'Brien clamouring for his breeches presented a not much more pleasing sight than Mr. O'Brien in the act of being butchered to make a Unionist holiday. More than all was the conclusion that here, at last, was a man of brains and heart and the civic sense, and that while he lived the sentimental politician and the professional patriot would never have their way. It is not surprising that the spectacle, as compared to that of Mr. Gladstone canvassing the universe for votes and Mr. Parnell scouring the civilised world for dollars, was salutary in the extreme, or that Mr. Balfour, whether for hate or love, at once became the most conspicuous and the most interesting figure of the English-speaking race.

It may be pleaded that he is neither a great orator nor a great statesman; that he is not a heaven-born administrator, nor a divinely appointed leader and manipulator of men. All that is for time to show. What meanwhile is certain is that he is a gentleman of the good type; that to an intelligence of more than common flexibility and strength he unites a fearless and intense conviction of the power of morals and the function of duty; and that it has been his merit to preserve one section of his fellow-countrymen from the blessings of anarchy and to renew and re-inspire the civic fibre in another.

CHARLES S. PARNELL, M.P.

ALF a Yankee and half an Englishman, a Protestant, a landowner, and a gentleman, Mr. Parnell has achieved an almost miraculous success in removing all external evidence of the attributes which Providence thought fit to bestow upon him.

The lineal descendant of an American officer whose chief distinction was that he lost his ship to a British captain, the inheritor of an estate conferred upon a British peer for his services in maintaining British law in Ireland, the Member for Cork is possessed of precisely those qualities which are incompatible with the possession of a drop of Irish blood. A Protestant educated at an English university, he has become the ally and intimate of Archbishop Croke, the patron of Patrick Ford, and the first and true inventor of the type of intellectual legislator represented by Mr. Matthew Harris and Dr. Tanner. Nor is this all: he has succeeded in creating and procuring believers in the myth which represents him as an Irishman, and has won credit with a considerable section of the community as an uncompromising and successful enemy of the country to which he owes his name, his education, and his estate.

It is an accepted fact that all men in their time play

many parts; and Mr. Parnell's repertory is by no means exhausted by this list of characters. Born in a station and educated under circumstances which might well have endowed him with a nice judgment and a refined taste, he has chosen for his associates the men who have penned the filthy calumnies of *United Ireland*; he has elected to assign an honourable place among his companions to an individual whom his friend Mr. Davitt has publicly denounced as a 'traitor, a coward, and a slanderer.' It is true that nowadays Mr. Parnell has changed to a great extent the character of his associates. English gentlemen who sought or obtained public favour by denouncing him now cringe for his support and hang upon his lips, and fine ladies are impressed by his interesting exterior and his admirable 'character.' The art of forgetting has indeed been brought to a perfection which must excite our wonder if not our admiration. If only forgetting were unmaking, if only the inability to remember a fact could blot the record of the past and serve as a proof that that fact had never been, then indeed we might easily bring ourselves to regard Mr. Parnell in the light in which his new-developed adulators profess to see him. But though some memories are short, others, strengthened by the stern tonic of sorrow, are long enough. There lies before the present writer a neatly engraved medal bearing the image and superscription of the 'Uncrowned King.' It is a fellow to that one found upon the 'patriot leader' Connell, who tortured men and women in the neighbourhood of Mill Street, and whose exploits were ended at the Cork Assizes. The image on that medal is a true emblem of the stamp impressed

upon scores and scores of savage crimes at a time when Mr. Parnell had not yet become the darling of our drawing-rooms. We all know that of what went on in Ireland during the bloody years between 1880 and 1885 Mr. Parnell knew practically nothing—for he himself has said it, and he himself has sworn it; but it is beyond all controversy that half of it was the work of men engaged in promoting the same ends as Mr. Parnell, and recognising Mr. Parnell as their chief. Mr. Parnell, when he signed the manifesto which one of his new allies justly stigmatised as ‘a scandalous, audacious, and gigantic act of robbery,’ was totally unable to project his mind into the future and to form an idea of what would be the consequences of his action; for this much we have upon his own authority. But that over and over again men and women suffered cruelly and shamefully because they did not obey this illegal order is simple matter of fact.

But, it will be said: ‘Tis true that these things happened; true that for two or three years parts of Ireland were reduced to a condition of savagery, and that the victims of every outrage happened by a strange coincidence to belong, without exception, to the party which was not led by Mr. Parnell. Still, neither Mr. Parnell nor his officers were called upon to take action in respect of occurrences for which they were not responsible and of which they did not approve. Nothing shows more clearly the extraordinary demoralisation of public opinion in Britain than the ready acceptance this easy doctrine has obtained. Grant every item of the apology, and to what does it all amount? Can we conceive any one of the great political leaders of whom this country has

been justly proud thus acting or thus neglecting to act? Do we not know perfectly well that not a single one of them but under similar circumstances would have postponed every other object of political ambition until, at the risk of position, success, life if need were, by fierce denunciation, by earnest entreaty, by inquiry protracted and searching, he had wrested from those who claimed to be his supporters the secret of the dark deeds done in his name?

But Mr. Parnell has succeeded. Yes: his measure of success is greater than is granted to many; and like other successful men he has his reward. As a landlord he has succeeded in retaining the right to recover his personal debts while he has moved heaven and earth to withhold the same right from such of his own class as were also his political opponents. And as a man of business and a patriot he has done extremely well. The produce of his quarries has commended itself to the discriminating Corporation of Dublin; and the 'tribute' of a grateful people is jingling in his pockets to the tune of forty thousand pounds—a sum for which the recipient could not even find time to say 'Thank you.' As a party leader, too, he has had his successes. The Gladstonian section exists on sufferance, awaiting his pleasure. Already he is hailed as one who, having created a party, will ere long be the founder of a nation. It is true that the encouragement comes from a man who with equal enthusiasm hailed an earlier patriot as 'one who had created an army, and would soon create a nation'; and is so far used to the work of salutation in the teeth alike of probability and of duty. When Mr. Gladstone devoted himself to the

task of hounding on Jefferson Davis to establish the cause of Slavery by the ruin of his country, he was undoubtedly wrong ; but this time his predictions may be more happily realised. It cannot be denied that every friend of Mr. Parnell and every enemy of this country—from the feeblest Home Rule bailie in the Edinburgh Town Council to Mr. Parnell's lieutenant, the Arch-Separatist himself—will do their best to bring about the fulfilment of the prophecy.

Yes : Mr. Parnell has been a successful man : there are many ways in which success may be achieved, there are some in which it may be deserved. Not so long since we had the advantage of learning what were the methods by which the Uncrowned King wooed success in the House of Commons. It is true that such means, if generally adopted, would reduce Parliament to the condition of a court of Welsh witnesses, and that no man in it would be able to believe either friend or enemy ; but these perhaps are matters of detail. Mr. Parnell has succeeded ; and are not Sir George Trevelyan, Sir William Harcourt, and Sir Balthazar Walter Foster, Knight, ready to bow down and worship ? As the master of a body of voters—(of voters 'leashed in like hounds')—he is doubtless a happy man, although occasionally the distribution of his political patronage must prove somewhat embarrassing, and the presentation of Captain O'Shea to the living of the city of Galway was an incident which must have caused a good deal of heart-burning.

To do the man justice, it must be admitted that, if we choose to be deceived by his present protestations of amity, we have no one but ourselves to thank : when time

and place were apt he has been frank enough in declaring his views. Meanwhile it would be well for us to make what use we can of those results that are born of the necessity of the hour. Mr. Parnell has 'rounded' upon his old confederates: he no longer loves Patrick Ford, the best Christian among Mr. Davitt's acquaintance; he has repudiated the Clan-na-Gael; such old chums as Brennan, Sheridan, Boyton, and Byrne (Frank Byrne, spouse and inspiration of the *Brave Little Woman*) have torn themselves from their bleeding country, and Mr. Parnell has not entreated them to return and share the fruits of their common labour. All this is to the good. It were well to do whatever we can to arrive at a perfect understanding as to whether this estrangement between old friends be permanent or not.

LEWIS MORRIS



SOME people, not wholly illiterate, have been known to admit that they could only regard the wonderful success of Mr. Lewis Morris as an author with a feeling closely akin to stupefaction. Their bewilderment is not inexcusable. Poetry, we are told, is a drug in the market. The genius of Tennyson and of Browning, as of Shelley and Keats before them, dawned slowly on the general reader. But here is a writer of verse (verse is a convenient euphemism in speaking of the body of this eminent author's work) whose books run into new editions as swiftly as the most scandalous autobiographies, or as novels which the libraries have boycotted. No doubt Mr. Lewis Morris obtained a testimonial certifying to his genius from Mr. Gladstone. But even that does not completely solve the mystery. Let us try, then, if we can make it a little clearer.

To the Puritan middle-class poetry is, and ever has been, a vain thing and a perilous. Their favourite conception of a poet has ever been that of a dishevelled and generally inebriate destroyer of souls. The Puritan matron is haunted by an impression that poetry leadeth to divorces and breach of promise cases, the criminal suffering in the witness-box for what he has taught in song. To these

views must be added the belief that there was once an immoral people called the Greeks, who carved shameless naked statues, and went about with very little clothing. And there, in a nutshell, you have the opinions on things rhythmic and Hellenic which find favour with the Puritan middle-class of Merry England, and of Bonnie Scotland, and, it may be, of Gallant Little Wales also. Nevertheless, when Mr. Lewis Morris produced an 'epic' (so called because it consisted of a series of short stories) dealing with those very Greeks, the book went straight home to the great heart of Philistia. And the fact was easily explicable. For here were Greek gods and goddesses whose true sphere was not the peaks of Olympus, but the platform of Exeter Hall. Here was Apollo declaiming like any curate suffering from floridity of style. Here was Juno discoursing as elegantly as a young school-mistress with literary aspirations. Here was the writer for whom Philistia had waited so long. His work was evidently poetry, for it was broken into separate lines. His admirers had the satisfaction of knowing that they, too, could appreciate verse and Hellenic legend as well as any of your pretenders to the loftiest culture.

And so it has been all through this great writer's career. The people who admire him are dead to verbal music and the magic of cunningly woven words. They like sermons, and they get them from Mr. Lewis Morris. They like vague and shallow optimism, and fragments of science served up with pietistic platitudes; and sometimes they like absolute nonsense. And all these things they find in the works of Mr. Lewis Morris as they never were combined before in the works of a single writer.

Notwithstanding his tendency to echo the lines of other men, Mr. Morris's style has strongly marked characteristics of its own. He is the greatest master of the *cheville* that the world has seen. In his command of conventional epithet he probably enjoys a similar supremacy. He will tell you of gadding vines, and young-eyed Innocence, and sun-kissed hills, and rosebuds pearly with dew, and white-winged ships, and wine-dark seas, and embattled clouds, and so on and so on, with as serene a persistence as if he were writing when Music, heavenly maid, was young. And again he will turn him to the Tennysonian mint; and then objects begin to wax and wane, and to take the dawn, and sounding shores are smitten, and we hear all about the process of the suns, and dramatic effects are produced by 'Ah me,' and 'Ay but'; and the bewildered reader asks himself: How *was* it I admired these phrases so before?

At other times the writer mixes his metaphors like a mad Elizabethan, and then we have him at his best, and our souls are gladdened by hearing of such portents as a flame like a shadow, and of ruins sown on a calm, and of a child that is a well, and of a young year that trips like a tender lamb, and of a young moonlight that curves a horn, and of a perfect woman, with a child in her arms,

'Fused by some cosmic interlacing curves
Of Beauty into a new innocence.'

How you can fuse a child with a curve it is difficult to understand. However, Mr. Morris wills to have it so.

Whosoever has still to make this distinguished writer's acquaintance might do well to begin his studies with *The Ode of Life*. It affords the happiest examples of Mr.

Lewis Morris's various 'manners.' There is first a dreadful crash and whirl of dissonant words, which have not, and may not have been intended to have, any distinct meaning. Nor need they. It is enough that they convey the impression that the author is somehow doing wonderful things over his readers' heads for the reconciliation of science and religion. However, the universe having wakened 'with a deep-drawn singultient breath,' we are introduced to a sleeping baby. In tracts of sleep

'The immature creature dwells, nor can recall
Its primal self or primal state at all.'

It is as needless to remark upon the grace and melody of these lines as upon the exquisite transition from the waking universe to the sleeping infant. After a little the note of Morrisian (Lewis Morrisian) pathos is struck. Mr. Morris has a vision of the child of the drunkard:

'I hear thy piteous cries
When the sot flings thee down with limbs that bleed:
Flings thee and takes no heed.'

We have then a delicate and poetic reference to the child of the savage:

'Springing and falling, born to eat and breed,
And wither under burning skies a weed.'

Similar felicities of thought and expression occur on every page, until under the heading 'Girlhood' we come to the magnificent passage which begins—

'Now with thy doll I see thee stand.'

Thereafter Mr. Morris expatiates on Youth and Love and Perfect Years, and Manhood and Old Age, wandering on from platitude to platitude, and revealing the most delightful command over the resources of doggerel. In

the end he returns to the sublime, whither no man may follow him.

Mr. Morris's triumphs as a dramatist are a tempting theme, but one on which we may not enter now. The dying words of his Gycia, however, so admirably illustrate his superiority to all that is maudlin and sickly in sentiment that they at least must be quoted. Gycia, a married woman, and a model of all the virtues, is loved, and loved in vain, by one Theodorus. Gycia's husband is slain, and herself mortally wounded. In her last moments this incomparable woman addresses her lover thus :

‘ Kiss me, good Theodorus,
I am no more a wife.’

Is further quotation necessary to prove our poet's dramatic insight and faultless taste ?

Not very long ago America lost her most popular author. The favour which the Rev. E. P. Roe's novels enjoyed in the States, compared to the works of the greatest dead and living masters of fiction, was remarked upon with wonder, and even with sarcasm, in England. Was this wise ? Considering the popularity of Mr. Lewis Morris among ourselves, were we altogether entitled to disdain Mr. Roe and his wonderful *clientèle* ? There was this, at least, to be said for Roe. He never claimed to be a great artist. He braved to the end Literature and all her sons. He gushed and maundered with a happy indifference to your pedants who prate about style and good taste and constructive skill. He never declared that, save from Scott or Fielding, he had nothing to learn in the practice of the art of fiction. Mr. Lewis Morris has not followed the wise example of Mr. Roe.

He takes himself most seriously. After his glorious achievements—after proving that not melody, nor originality of thought, nor grace of diction is requisite for an author who is writing that which is not prose to win vast popularity in England—after so much dared and done, he might have been modest with impunity. Alas ! Mr. Morris has thought otherwise. He, the author of such blank verse lines as this one,

‘ Which sets itself to Be. And yet is He,’—

he has left it on record that in the matter of blank verse he has nothing to learn, except (mayhap) from Lord Tennyson or Mr. Swinburne. There can be no doubt that he takes himself for an artist. And here it is that we must venture to remonstrate with him. Some time ago he seemed bent on embracing a political career. He failed, however, to carry out his intention : which was, no doubt, a good thing for politics but a bad thing for literature. However, he is giving pleasure, we presume, to his multitudinous readers and, no great harm is done if in reading his works they cherish the pleasing delusion that they are reading poetry. Probably they would not have read poetry in any case. But since he plainly labours under the belief that he, too, has worn singing-robcs, it is a pity that he cannot be enlightened. He has won a body of readers : not so large as Roë’s, but still imposing in its numbers : precisely because he is *not* an artist. Why should he not be content ? Why should he hug the delusion that he has added a chamber to the House Beautiful of Art ? A man may not serve both Mrs. Grundy and Apollo.

ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE

MR. SWINBURNE has never been of those singers who elect to dwell beside the springs of Dove. To think of his career is to think of excursions and alarms, of the Goddess Grundy in hysterics, of Grub Street calling unto Exeter Hall, of pamphlet answering unto pamphlet, of recriminations and vituperations manifold, of pseudonymous libelling and all the joys of the literary scrimmage. One may wish that Mr. Swinburne had been less impulsively combative ; but on the career as a whole every one will look with pride to whom the honour of England and the glory of English letters are dear. Mr. Swinburne's genius has broadened, his thought has ripened, his enthusiasm has burned for nobler and nobler ends with the years. You have only to compare the first to the last series of his *Poems and Ballads* to see how far he has advanced. In melody, it is true, an advance is hardly discernible ; but then in melody an advance was hardly possible. From the first the music was unfailing, unborrowed, irresistible. In *Atalanta* there sprang up in the pure, soft-tinted light of the morning of the world such a fountain of clear, soaring song as had never before chimed in English ears. The strain was like no other man's. And in the *First Series* there are pieces which for distinction

of melody their author has never surpassed: *Itylus*, and *A Match*, and the *Hymn to Proserpine*, and above all *Hesperia*—that supreme lyric where the gloriously moulded lines recall the magnificent rolling of the ‘full-flushed waves,’ in which ‘all of a man that regrets and all of a maid that allures’ seems linked imperishably with the haunting splendour of the red sunset and the solemn undulation of deep waters and the steady blowing of the strong, bland west wind. But, melody apart, the advance is indubitable. For, after all, they who railed against the *First Series*, who saw in it only so much mellifluous prurience, so much of what Wandering Willie would have called ‘sculduddery’ presented in exotic and ornate forms of verse, grossly as they overstated their case, were yet not wholly without reason: the air was too often as the air of the Venusberg cavern. In the *Third Series* the advance is from languor to exultation, from the green-sickness of youth to the passion of man; the verses ring and glow with jubilant love of Nature, they echo the thunder of the surges and the clarions of the storm-wind, they are inspired by the patriotism as fiery as ever burned in a poet’s heart. *The Armada* will live with *Ye Mariners of England* and the *Ballad of the ‘Revenge.’* Mr. Swinburne’s unquenchable love of England has deepened with the years. Through it he has (naturally and properly) become anathema to every good Gladstonite. At one time regarded as a visionary republican, he has for some time past stood shoulder to shoulder with the foes of revolution. From the first it was patent that there could be no sympathy between the fiery lyrist and the upholders of the New Radicalism, with its ‘barren women and

mules,' its canting fanatics, and its cacklers for peace at any price. The politics which are set to music in *Songs Before Sunrise* may seem the politics of Cloude-cuckootown. But in *Songs Before Sunrise* the singer's love of England shines out through the mist of illusory dreams—notably in *The Litany of Nations* and *The Eve of Revolution*. And let a man love England and live long enough, and there is no doubt with whom his place must be in the end.

When Mr. Swinburne is at his best it is well-nigh impossible to do justice to the music of his verse. You are fairly carried off your feet : you are as

‘ One who drinks from a charmed cup
Of foaming and sparkling and murmuring wine.’

And the melodies are as various as they are faultless : the cadences are now caressingly tender, now lulling, lingeringly mournful, now resonant as the blare of silver trumpets. The verse now rolls majestically, now dances airily, now ripples with a chime as of fairy bells, now sweeps along with a fury and a clamour of words resistless as the galliambics of Catullus. There has been no such metrical inventor since English was English. Compared to Mr. Swinburne, Keats and Coleridge and Shelley are poor of resource, limited in range, timid and commonplace in execution. That is not to say that Mr. Swinburne has excelled them in melody ; only he is, so to speak, an adept in the use of a far wider choice of instruments. From the simplest metres he ranges through the most artificial and elaborate. He can charm with a lyric such as the *Ballad of Dreamland*, witching you with the interplay of the renascent rhymes and the cunning clinching of the sense with the refrain ; and he can thrill and

inspire you with such a chorus as the great battle-chorus in *Erechtheus*, where the words clash and sparkle and thunder till the verses seem filled with the splendour and terror of battle, with the turmoil of hurtling and champing horses, the flashing and bickering of spears.

Like Shakespeare and Dante and Mr. Lewis Morris, Mr. Swinburne has his faults. He has a tendency to use words in unwonted connections, and to deal in constructions alien to the genius of the language. He lavishes too freely the resources of his multitudinous vocabulary; his ideas are at times crushed and smothered beneath the jewelled panoply of the diction. He has too often sacrificed the spirit to the letter: alliterating not wisely but too well. He has been accused of obscurity and vagueness—and vague, no doubt, he sometimes is—but on that score he has received less than justice from his censors. It can hardly be too often repeated: the peculiar power of lyric verse lies in its faculty of suggesting in some inexplicable way through the cadence and colour of the words a beauty above and beyond their exact significance. Now Mr. Swinburne more than any other English writer depends upon verbal music to convey his ideas and to produce his intended effects. Phrases and lines which at first appear obscure, pleonastic, even meaningless, are seen as you read to have been inserted with subtle art to heighten the orchestration (so to speak) of a long and elaborate movement. He is of all writers the one whose poetry approaches most closely to the domain of music. In his descriptions he seldom endeavours to produce a faithful and minute picture. What he seeks to do is to capture the spirit of a scene, to pluck out the secret of its

beauty or mystery or terror, to reflect the impression which it made upon his mind. And in this he is often brilliantly successful. Take, for example, his beautiful *Garden of Cymodoce*, and say if it were possible to render more exquisitely the charm of that wonderful sea-cave, the fairy mystery of its rim of glimmering crimson, the feeling at once sensuous and daunting of the gloom which seems to breathe and dilate above the silent liquid floor. And there are many such passages in his work: passages in which lines that at first may seem redundant and even meaningless are discovered in the end to be delicately essential to the effect which the piece as a whole is designed to convey. Above all English poets he is the poet of the sea. His love of ocean does not rise from the mere sensuous delight of a swimmer in its sting and buoyancy and power. That delight he has, indeed, rendered wonderfully (as in *Tristram*); but his finest sea-pieces are born not of sensuous enjoyment but of imaginative sympathy and insight and ardour. None has more beautifully described the 'soft-coloured, undulating gardens of the water-world. None has so vividly rendered the magic of the dawn breaking over the fields of the green rippled deep. And for an effect of imaginative terror wrung out of the strife of inanimate things it would be hard to surpass his vision of Death seated on the wave-swept pinnacles of granite amid the blackness of midnight tempest and the lightnings of the foam.

It is as a lyrist that Mr. Swinburne's fame will endure. A dramatist he is not; his plays are as plays 'splendidly null,' despite the burning poetry in which they abound. When you read *Atalanta* and *Erechtheus* you do not greatly

care what may befall Meleager or Chthonia or Praxithea ; what you do care for is that this poet should set their story to incomparable lyric music. When you think of a great play, as Mr. Swinburne has truly said in his *Study of Shakespeare*, you do not think of any single person or passage. 'It is to the whole masterpiece the mind turns at mention of its name. The one entire and perfect chrysolite of *Othello* is neither Othello, nor Desdemona, nor Iago, but each and all.' But you never do so think of Mr. Swinburne's plays : they are memorable to you for certain passages and characters. To recall his great trilogy is simply to recall his Mary. But who cares to recall his trilogy ? and who loves art and is not the happier for his lyrics ? Lord Tennyson is still the living glory of his race ; and while that is so there is none but will rejoice in the fact of his Laureateship. But we are too intelligent to tolerate a repetition of the Pope and Cibber scandal, and to Lord Tennyson only one successor is possible.

Even yet the great body of readers have but a slight acquaintance with his work, and lie under the delusion that he is only a musical but monotonous amorist and a graceless iconoclast. Such is the impression still prevalent regarding a writer whose versatility is hardly less noteworthy than his supreme word-compelling faculty : the writer who has given us, along with verses instinct with the Greek spirit, bathed in the radiance of 'Old Ionia,' verses which seem surcharged with the terror and gloom, the tingling sense of imminent wrath from on high, of the Hebrew poetry : the writer who has moulded the language into lyrics of nobler structure than were ever

built before out of English words, who has sung of battle and the sea and the glory of England with a fiery sincerity which a reader must be without heart or brain to resist: the one writer who in modern times has restored to us in simple, unimitative perfection of style and metre, of passion and of pathos, the old Border ballads, of which the secret has seemed lost to men. Much of Mr. Swinburne's work may prove of transient interest; but when time has done what criticism can only feebly attempt, and severed the enduring from the ephemeral in his legacy to his countrymen, there will still remain—to use his own noble words in speaking of a lesser poet than himself—'a landmark in the high places of verse to which future travellers studious of the fruits and features of the land may turn and look up and see what English hands could rear.'

THE REV. CHARLES H. SPURGEON

MR. SPURGEON preaches at the Metropolitan Tabernacle to the largest congregation in the world. That building—the ugliest ever raised by the hand of man—is capable of holding upwards of six thousand souls, and for him it is always packed. In connection are a Pastors' College, an Orphans' Home, and other institutions alike excellent and prosperous. As for their common founder, he is so copious an author that, to say nothing of occasional pieces like *The Treasury of David*—(consisting of seven volumes of five hundred solid, closely printed pages each)—he has published a sermon a week without a single break for over five-and-twenty years; and, being popular as copious, he is read all through the realms of English. His rise was rapid. At sixteen he preached 'with much acceptance'; but years before that 'the late sainted Mr. Knill of Chester' had predicted eminence on the most cursory examination ('The gossip keekit in his loof!'). At eighteen he had charge of the Baptist chapel at Waterbeach, near Cambridge; at twenty he was ministering in New Park Street, Southwark; at twenty-seven the Metropolitan Tabernacle had risen up about him 'like an exhalation,' and he had already attained the long meridian of his splendour.

To win and keep such a position and such an influence therewith a man must have great and shining qualities. Mr. Spurgeon has them and something more. Fortunate in his merits, he is not less happy in his faults. He is narrow, bigoted, ignorant ; but he is so just where breadth, tolerance, learning would have blunted the point of his utterance and purged the very salt of his doctrine. The central fact in his career, the corner-stone of his fortunes, is that his words hit, level to the blank, the thick intelligence of the lower middle-class. There is no sentence that it cannot apprehend, nor any thought it cannot more or less appreciate. If he know Judah he also knows Philistia, and Philistia, being grateful, rejoices in him and is glad. Disdainful—perhaps incapable—of subtleties as a blacksmith at his forge, he is plain John Blunt, saying a thing straight out, and recking no jot nor tittle for those qualifications which may possibly stamp it truer but certainly make it less effective. There is much common-sense shrewdness in his deliverances concerning life and manners, and though he is extravagant sometimes he is never ridiculous. He is not dull—(and O how much shall be forgiven a man for that !)—and he is only rarely commonplace, for his style is touched with a quaint and homely humour that carries with it a tang or relish agreeable if a trifle vulgar : as who should say the onion, or the garlic even, in ‘ the capacious salad bowl.’ When not theological he is didactic, but his maxims are excellently cheerful—are even stimulating—albeit threadbare since the years of the aboriginal moralist. Then, on fit occasion he evinces a power of honest, manly, unaffected pathos all can feel and understand. And as his

writings are readable, so are their very titles 'fetching': as witness *The Cheque-book on the Bank of Faith*, *A Double Knock at the Door of the Young*, *The Spare Half-Hour*, *The Salt Cellars*, and his magazine *The Sword and Trowel*—all in the good tradition of Nonconformity, and all admirably fitted to batter in the brain-pans of his readers not unpleasantly. Your evangelical—whose life, God knows, hath a plentiful lack of entertainment—'tumbles' at once to legends of such promise, as his fathers before him did to those of Richard Baxter; nor does he foolishly bestow his trust, for while his pastor's theology abounds in gloom his utterances thereupon are cheering enough. Like others of his creed, the preacher expresses the usual sorrow for the 'sinner'; but he contemplates the end of that unfortunate—('not only dead but damned')—with singular and touching equanimity. Nay, one has a lurking suspicion that he hath in him to come down on Dives (being in torment) with the assurance that 'it serves him jolly well right.' For in truth he has no sort of patience with doubt or unbelief, no sort of interest in any point of view but his own; he has no time, he tells you—(and you honestly believe him)—'to play tomfool with Socinians, Rationalists, and such like people.' Such are the jovial and buxom sentences wherein, as *The Daily Dublin Post-Boy* remarked of *Alciphron*, 'the Freethinkers of the present age in their various shifted tenets are pleasantly, elegantly, and solidly confuted.'

Are his writings literature? The answer must be halting. It can scarce be said that they are not. Of the higher and deeper elements of English—its capacity of exquisite

expression, of delicately dividing between delicate shades of meaning, of full yet chastened utterance—he has no suspicion. Not for him are the rolling harmonies, the subtle cadences, the angel-trumpeting of Milton or Jeremy Taylor; but now and again he gives you an echo of Baxter or of Bunyan. Rather pool than well, his English is at least undefiled. It is the language of the middle-class purged of its baser elements and with the finer parts continually employed with discrimination and accomplishment. Belief is but an accident of mind, and of modern Englishmen this one most resembles Mr. Bradlaugh—(an honest fellow and an able, he)—though vastly his superior in humour. Also he is absolutely single-minded and ‘honest as the skin between his brows.’ His personal popularity is greatest with those who know him best, though he will sacrifice his private friendships to what he holds the truth, and he withdrew from the Evangelical Alliance and lately from the Baptist Union—(the ‘Down Grade’ controversy)—for that they seemed to him to leave the ancient and the righteous way.*

And those fortunate and profitable faults? Unhappily for the world—the world as opposed to his congregation—they are not far to seek. His is the ignorance of them that will not learn. ‘I have all along had an aversion to college,’ he says, with less grammar than usual; and the confession is significant as frank. ‘College’ is a means to an end, and to him that end is hateful. To him the magic of things remote in time and space, the necromancy of learning and art and literature—save as some touch may enter into the narrow circle of the Baptist creed—are

* See Appendix.

obnoxious and repellent. He is the most perfect expression now in being of that *echt-britische Beschränktheit* with which the German loves to reproach us islanders. Cities so far apart as Toulouse, Hamburg, and Stockholm have looked on bits of him translated, but no Englishman of half his eminence is less regarded of foreign critics. And it is no wonder. He hits our lower middle-class and nothing else, for his thought is shallow as narrow. His ideas are like hob-nails—cheap, useful, utterly wanting in distinction; and his very infallibility—(for of course he is infallible)—produces an effect of coarse hands and clumsy creaking boots. He only does what he believes to be right; but he has the true middle-class temperament—the temperament whose best expression is Mr. Gladstone—and what is right is right because he wants to do it. For instance he is a smoker and a teetotaler; he has defended the use of tobacco in passages remarkable alike for humour and common-sense, and has even talked of ‘smoking to the glory of God’; and the gentlest alcoholic stimulants, Shakespeare’s ‘pot of small ale,’ the ‘tipenny’ of Burns, will move him to furies of derision. Now, the ‘disinterested spectator’ (if such there be) would surely hold the tankard (in moderation) to be useful and defensible as the pipe. But Mr. Spurgeon, being a man of appetites, is incapable of disinterestedness. He wants to smoke, so he blesses tobacco; he does not want to drink, so he bans good liquor and bad: and the theology of the banning is unimpeachable as that of the blessing—because he will have it so, and there is not shall say him Nay. His position in the ‘Down Grade’ controversy proves something other than his honesty, for he con-

fessedly left the Baptist Union because it was getting infected by breadth of sentiment and a certain sense of toleration.

But *what* does he understand? The Bible? Well, his verbal knowledge is nearly perfect; but what he apprehends is Calvin's conception of what was written. The literature of Israel is intensely local. There are passages wherein the perfumes of Sharon and Lebanon, the majesty of the hills about Jerusalem, the glory of the Temple on the first day of its finished splendour, are so caught and rendered that in a distant age, an alien speech, a land remote and strange, they affect you exactly as they affected them to whose sense they were actually present. Those who feel this most will best understand under what restrictions and with what explanations the lessons of Semitic thought are usefully adapted to the needs and uses of the British Sunday. Mr. Spurgeon applies it all to the life of Newington Causeway and the Walworth Road as if the words were of yesterday and the facts were modern journalism. Hence his success—his success and its limitations!

As a preacher, he wields a strong, well-modulated voice, and his gestures are appropriate and forcible without being extravagant. Yet he is rather speaker than orator, and to read is as good as to hear him. He is famous through his matter not his manner, and for all his strength and self-sufficiency—for all his egoism, in a word—he has not enough emotional capacity to thrill his audiences. You listen always with attention, often with interest, sometimes with amusement; but none that has heard will ever write of him as Melville wrote in old St.

Andrews days of the preaching of his dying master, or tell that 'he made me so grew and tremble that I could not hold a pen to wryt.' And even had Mr. Spurgeon lived Knox's life, could he ever have spoken with Knox's force? Who shall say? What is certain is that he is a modern man, and to feel with intense conviction about anything seems among the lost arts.

AUGUSTUS HARRIS



WE all rise to our feet. Some scale pillars, others clamber on seats, handkerchiefs are unfurled, the orchestra brays out *Rule Britannia*. The other Modern Men range in line against the wings; more and more brazen grows the music; women would faint if only they were not sure that nobody would mind them. Listen to the tramp of the soldiers! Wildly the leader of the orchestra waves his baton. Now, gentlemen! now, now, now! Sit down there! Silence! - Who are you a-shoving of? Louder, gentlemen, louder! The orchestra is twisted into knots, every face is dripping with enthusiasm, mouths are gaping, eyes on fire, the general bosom bursts with a single heart. Now, gentlemen, now! The music is deafening, yet still the cry is Louder, louder! Quick, quicker, quicker! Bang, bang, bang!! Cr-r-rash!!! Enter Mr. Augustus Harris.

He walks superbly round and round the stage, while we look at him fondly, and note that he is dressed in the British Flag. America lent us her Barnum for a season, but he found our Mr. Harris when he came. No two men could be more different. Barnum is a gentle cynic, but he whom we call Druriolanus—ah! he is too great to be cynical. In that expansive bosom cynicism would run

hither and thither, looking for the way out. The story of Mr. Harris's career should—and one day will—be offered to the young for a Christmas gift. Seldom will so much instruction and amusement have been compressed into one volume. Boys love tales of noble patriotism, and Mr. Harris is firstly and secondly and thirdly a patriot. Had it not been for his mighty love of Britannia's Lion and the wooden walls of Old England, he would never have ascended the throne of Drury Lane. But a few years ago he was 'creating' a comic part in *Pink Dominoes*, but his heart was not in it. Where was his bosom? It was far away, feeding its fill on patriotism. He pined to do for the stage what Drake and Raleigh and Nelson had done for England generally: what Macdermott—the Immense Artist, as Mr. Wedmore said of Méryon—was doing for the music-halls. Drury Lane stood empty, Mr. Harris walked in and filled it. He is to be knighted at the Queen's next Jubilee.

Mr. Harris's place of business is called the National Theatre because he is so patriotic. There are other patriotic houses in London, but Drury Lane has the biggest trumpets. These trumpets only play one tune; that tune is *Rule Britannia*; and it is behind that tune that Mr. Harris has advanced to fame and fortune. There were diffident ones who predicted that the Drury Lane crown would never fit his head, but he retorted by wearing it on his bosom. His successes are a coronal to which new brilliants are added yearly; and to gaze upon that trophy, to tot up its market value, is to realise how prodigious and how shining a creation Mr. Harris is. There are no dissentients now: we all walk in the pro-

cession ; he is our big drum. His stage-management is a national possession like the genius of Mr. Gladstone. He is said to have made Italian Opera pay. If ever he were made Lord Mayor, his Show . . . But who can imagine what his Show would be ? The mind reels—‘dizzy, lost, and unavailing’—from the effort.

Perhaps every one can have too much patriotism except the man at the door, and hence it has been argued that by-and-by Mr. Harris’s patriotic pictures will pall. That is because his critics do not fathom him. They talk as if patriotism were without variety, as if it were a hobby alone. No doubt it may exist in only one colour. In the case of Mr. Plimsoll, for instance, it chiefly glows at the thought of ships ; Sir Wilfrid Lawson would perhaps be an ordinary person if we all drank water ; some feel like patriots at the name of Mr. Biggar, others only when they read of strikes, or shares, or Lord Wolseley, or the Arts and Crafts. It may be admitted that these persons get tiresome unless they can lock their bosoms up ; but their patriotism is not as Mr. Harris’s. His bosom says to theirs what the tank said to the bottles : ‘Come here, and I shall swallow you all.’ His patriotism, in short, is as wide as theirs is narrow. He keeps it in bottle, and his cellar (or bosom) contains many different patriotic brews. One can imagine him and Mr. Pettitt discussing the sort of play they will serve up next, just as a man speaks of having another bottle up from his cellar. ‘What do you say to the army ?’ Mr. Harris asks, and the butler replies that the army has become too cheap a tap. ‘We might try another African war, though,’ says Mr. Harris ; but Mr. Pettitt questions if there is another bottle of that left. The sea and its gallant mariners is

Druriolanus's next suggestion, but Mr. Pettitt reminds him that the sideboard is covered with empty flagons of that brand. 'Then what do you say to racing?' 'A good idea; we have not had a bottle of it for months.' So racing is the bottle cracked; and from that moment until the first night Mr. Harris is filled with enthusiasm for British sport. None, to look at him now, could believe that only a little while ago he could speak of nought but Egyptian wars, and that his patriotic eye saw only blinding sand and corpses bleaching in the sun. Where now is his magnificent Union-Jackery over the English Universities and 'Commemoration' and the 'Scene on the River'? Is this the man who defeated the Spanish Armada for the second time? whose Cavalier feelings when a Monarch hid in the Royal Oak were judiciously tempered by regard for possible Roundheads in the gallery? It is the same man, but he has forgotten all about soldiers and tars, armadas and undergraduates. He has a bosom that will admit nothing except patriotism; but after the first night its contents are as lees to be cast out. Another vintage at once brims up the vehicle.

The British Museum is well enough, but Drury Lane Theatre on a first night is the most wondrous spectacle in London. It is really a triumphal procession. A royal personage may be in one box, dozens of dukes and countesses are certain to be in others. The Poet-Laureate is inflated with pride if he gets a stall. Three Cabinet Ministers have two seats in the dress-circle between them. Painters and sculptors who got the R.A. easily enough find it—how much harder to obtain a stall in the back row! Professional men and costermongers fight for admittance to the pit. The play itself is one of the most—

the most—well, let us say the most patriotic ever produced on any stage, but its success is never for a moment in doubt. The public has been duly notified that the helmets cost a pound apiece, and Scene Fourth a thousand pounds, and the heroine's bridal dress two-hundred-and-fifty pounds (£250), the whole produced on a scale of splendour never before attempted on the British stage. Of course this is sufficient, and we are there to admire, not to criticise. What does it matter if the drama be fustian when the elephant's trunk is real? The comedy consists perhaps in the funny man's digging the aged spinster in the ribs with his thumb; but the audience cheer because they know the actors cost some forty pound a week. The Drury Lane pantomime is the showiest, the most gorgeous, the most processional and narcotic in the world; but who would presume to fall asleep when the 'principal boy' is getting a guinea a smirk? Finally the curtain falls on an extraordinary scene of enthusiasm, when Mr. Harris leads his collaborator forward, and the sublime spectacle is offered gratis of these two Wonders clasping hands in full view of the audience. The critics are carried away in the general rapture, and Mr. Harris is able to advertise columns of 'press opinions' that would have flattered Shakespeare. The intelligent foreigner is seldom at a Drury Lane first night, for a stall on such an occasion, like residence in Moray Place, or Lancaster Gate, provides a satisfaction 'even religion cannot give.' But some foreign princes may have been offered standing room, and we get off cheaply if they put down what they saw to patriotism.

JAMES M'NEILL WHISTLER.

HAT Mr. Whistler the *farceur* cuts a much braver figure in the imagination of the public than Mr. Whistler the painter is unfortunate enough. Yet none is to blame for it but the Master of the Butterfly himself. The most of men recoil in horror from the pit of notoriety which other hands have digged for them: Mr. Whistler has complacently devised himself a peculiar abysm of publicity. Though an hundred hacks of the New Journalism have shriekingly attacked him, yet can he afford to smile, contemptuous of assault; for no hurt that they might do him can compare to the injury he has wilfully done upon himself. To prying paragraph or impertinent interview he owes little, whether for good or evil. With the instinct of a born Yankee, from the very beginning of his career he has deemed it wise to run his own show. The necessity of advertisement has always been apparent to him, but in rivalry with Mr. Barnum he has preferred to bill his hoardings for himself. To compel the consideration of the public he invented 'Jimmy'; and 'Jimmy,' the jocose Oracle of the White Lock, whose utterances are generally as inscrutably futile as those of the Delphic priestess herself, remains one of his most pleasing (if most demoralising) inventions. In 'Jimmy,' however, the *farceur* inevitably

prevails over the artist : wherein he has outrun his creator's intention. But he would not have been an oracle had he not been misunderstood, and the public has treated his excellent art with levity, and taken his mild jocosity in grim earnest. There is none who is not familiar with the curious little notes—in bastard French and signed with the mystic bug—which 'Jimmy' contributes to periodical literature. Their humour has not always been apparent, yet they have attracted more attention than the frequent masterpieces their author has exhibited under the *alias* of James M'Neill Whistler. Time, though, will set all this right, and future generations—while they neither know, nor care aught of the Suffolk Street signboard, the Fulham claimant, the silly correspondence these called into being—will recognise the master hand in the *Sarasate*, the *Carlyle*, the *Lady Archibald Campbell*, many a brilliant achievement besides.

It has been said that Mr. Whistler has in him a good deal of Malvolio and a something of Macaire. And it is a fact that the spirit of farce and a certain recklessness may be observed in all he says or does ; and it is at least a probability that only he was ever so fantastically arrogant. Our modern Malvolio is always cross-gartered. He can scarce exist outside the sunshine of applause. For himself his admiration is unbounded. He asserts in a tone of defiant assurance that he stands by the side of Rembrandt, Tintoretto, Velasquez. By the side of these, quotha ? Nay, but above them ; for ' Why drag in Velasquez ' ? To take a lower estimate of his genius is (to him) a confession of critical incompetence, and while he covers with farce all those who decline to join in his wor-

ship he receives the homage of the faithful with the *non-chalance* of gratified superiority. It is not so long ago that his admirers gave a banquet in his honour, and 'Jimmy' (who on that occasion was given his head) had nothing to say but that the tribute came too late. Of course the tribute was deserved, but it was deserved in an equal degree a quarter of a century ago. So long as the whole world persisted in regarding him as a common clown; some such counterblast was justified. But now that 'Jimmy' is the 'Master,' and has gathered about him a band of obsequious disciples—is as it were the core of a great, big heart of flattery and imitation—would not a modest face become him better than those exercises in vanity to which he still descends?

Thus far we have insisted on his personality, not because it has any influence on the practice of his art, but because he never suffers us to lose sight of it. The work, however, has far other and far greater interest than the man. The British Philistine has never ceased to assail it, for the reason that he could never understand it. But representative (as opposed to decorative) art has no attraction for Mr. Whistler. He does not stoop to the production of square yards of literature in the flat; those who look for an anecdote within the frame of every picture may betake themselves at once to Sir John Millais, Mr. W. P. Frith, and the hoardings *passim*; the serious person will look in vain to him for moral encouragement or the elevation of his soul. And this fact proves that, even if he himself seem sometimes lacking in self-respect, he ever respects his art. The very meanest of his 'notes' and 'arrangements' is the deliberate outcome of artistic re-

search. Harmony of tone and arrangement of line are the results which he has ever striven to attain, and his achievement has won him a position among the masters—a position that not all that is at enmity with art, not even the eccentricities of ‘Jimmy,’ can utterly abolish or destroy. The Seer of Coniston, in making his famous onslaught upon that historical *Arrangement in Black and Gold*, was only giving another proof of the contempt and abhorrence in which he has always held pictorial art.

Mr. Whistler’s artistic equipment is wellnigh complete. To sureness of vision he adds extraordinary technical accomplishment. None better understands nor more brilliantly practises the selection of material. For he is no blind worshipper of Nature : on the contrary, he holds—and has said it in print—that Nature is usually wrong. ‘Nature contains the elements,’ he writes, ‘in colour and form, of all pictures, as the key-board contains the notes of all music. . . . To say to the painter that Nature is to be taken as she is, is to say to the player that he may sit on the piano.’ But he can do more than select his material : he can treat it (when he likes, which is not always) with real distinction of style. He is no outcast from convention, wandering the world with nothing but his individuality to aid. He has appreciated the value of the great artistic tradition in the past ; and if in defiance of the past he sometimes produces work which is not art, his failure is due to arrogance far more than to ignorance. The artists of the British School (to whom the man and all his works are, happily, an offence) have charged him with being merely Gallic. But in reality there is in him no touch of the parish beadle, no suggestion of the parish

pump. His assailants mumble or gabble with a Cockney twang: *he* speaks the language of art pure and undefiled. Messrs. E. Burne Jones and Frith have stated on oath in the witness-box that he lacks finish: by which it is presumed they mean that his work is not as tight and hard and unpainter-like as their own. If you admit that 'finish' means a painful elaboration of unessential details, then assuredly he is a stranger to the quality so dearly beloved of the Academician. If, on the other hand, as we prefer to believe, a work of art is finished when the artist has adequately expressed the idea it was his purpose to convey, then does he display, both in etching and in paint, a rare quality of completeness. Few have realised with equal intensity the importance of representing only what is essential. And it is just this neglect of the superfluous which makes the majority of his works good art. Sometimes, it is true, he permits 'Jimmy' to invade the province of 'James M'Neill'; and then you get canvases scrawled over by a personality and infested with a mannerism which give the foe in Askelon some right to gibe. But whatever his shortcomings, in one of his rôles he is a man of genius, and he has done more in the service of art than any other English-speaking painter of his generation.

The theory which has always animated his art might easily have been deduced from his practice. But, oddly enough, he has been bitten with the desire of expounding his views to the public, like the commonest Art Congressman or art critic of them all. In the pompous dialect of New England he has discussed in public Art (with an A) for the benefit of that herd of critics and amateurs which

he has ever affected to despise. The result is one of the best pieces of criticism in the language. Yet when he ascended the rostrum his sense of humour must surely have slumbered. 'Art is upon the Town' was one of his liveliest (and truest) epigrams. Did it never occur to him that in introducing her to a mixed audience at that hour of the night he had himself become Sir Pandarus of Troy? And if it had, would he therefore have permitted himself to tremble and turn and be changed?

SIR FREDERICK LEIGHTON, BART.,
P.R.A.

N raising the Academy to the distinguished—the commercially and socially distinguished—position which it occupies, the greatest amount of credit is due to Sir Frederick Leighton. None could represent more worthily the social and official side of art. He is no mere servant of the Muse but an accomplished and successful man of the world, with many and varied interests beyond his easel. His felicity of speech has gained him much applause. His pronouncements at the banquet over which he annually presides are heeded with respectful interest. His manner, otherwise Olympian, is ever tempered with a certain pomp of suavity: he can hold converse with mere worldlings, and avoid the semblance of superiority. Nor is he lacking in tact and the instinct for affairs. In his hands the business interests of the Academy have not suffered. Indeed, from all points of view save one he has been an exemplary President. But this single exception is of immense importance. It cannot be said that either by precept or example he has strenuously advanced the cause of art. Under his rule the Academical standard has remained unaltered: the outsiders, whose contributions give the Exhibition such

distinction as it has, are treated with little more consideration than a decade ago ; no new theory, no fresh experiment in paint, may pass the portals of Burlington House. The most of Sir Frederick's colleagues, like the companions of Ulysses, have filled their ears with wax, and their President is so securely bound to the mast of officialism that, though he hears (and understands) the voice of the Siren, to obey her is not for him. Rumour has it that he warmly sympathises with the modern school, and that he has thrown the weight of his authority into the scale of reform. If this be true, it is strange that with all his eloquent influence and his persuasive personality he should have achieved so little. For it is at least certain that his Presidency has witnessed no change of policy, has shown no sign of growing enlightenment. With Stupidity the very gods do battle in vain ; and what is true of Stupidity is true of the Commercial Spirit.

As a painter, Sir Frederick has always 'held aloft the banner of the Ideal.' With steadfastness and sincerity he has aimed at the grand style. He has never stooped to the niggling of the Pre-Raphaelites, nor subordinated dignity of design to the loving-careful rendering of trivial details. From 1855, when he exhibited his famous *Cimabue's Madonna being Carried in Procession Through the Streets of Florence*, until now he has consistently cultivated beauty of line. His intention has been admirable. He has no *arrière pensée*, whether moral or metaphysical. He has frankly pursued art for art's sake. Though he has chiefly concerned himself with classical or mediæval subjects, he has had the intelligence to realise that archæology is not the whole of art. In his choice of models he has dis-

played extraordinary courage: he has kept Michelangelo and the Greek marbles so steadily before his eyes that in the majority of his pictures their influence is but too plain. His method of work is uncommonly—is even honourably—laborious. His composition once determined, he makes nude studies of every figure which he purposes to include in it, and he draws and redraws every scrap of drapery. And the result of all this toil and thought is failure. His pictures are dry and learned. They smell egregiously of the lamp. They display untiring research, but give no hint of observation. Not one of them ever looked as if some ‘mighty genius had struck it off at a blow.’ Throughout his career he has sought inspiration in the grand classical tradition. But the note of individuality, without which no work can be great, is always absent from his results. Tradition has proved too strong for him: he has never been able to vivify it, and his more ambitious canvases are as cold and lifeless as Canova’s marbles. Whatever he touches gives forth an echo of the past—the past and unreality. When you stand before his pictures in an attitude of inquiry, there is not one but haunts you with reminiscences. This drapery suggests some old familiar bas-relief; an arm or a shoulder babbles of Michelangelo; yonder attitude is the ghost of an invention of Raphael. And somehow, though these spectres do not seem to belong to the composition in whose service they are marshalled, Sir Frederick has not sufficiently transformed to be able to claim them as his own; you are even conscious of the material of his model. Many of his draperies remind you not so much of the *Niké Untying her Sandal* as of a plaster cast thereof. There is more of the

true Greek spirit in one picture of Millet's than in all the President's achievement, 'professionally classic' though it be.

Sir Frederick has never wandered from his convention. He will leave English art precisely where he found it. He has added nothing—not even himself; he leaves it nothing which might not have been done as well or better before his advent. He has little claim to distinction in colour. In his youth he sat at the feet of Ary Sheffer and drank in learning from the urn of Steinle, a pupil of Overbeck—of Overbeck, the chaste, aspiring German. These ill-starred influences he has been unable to live down. No school could be worse for a young painter than that of Overbeck, to whom indulgence in colour was the unpardonable sin. Of course the President is as keenly conscious as any of the absurdity of this very German feeling. But it was to his anxious and intelligent youth that 'twas revealed; and his art has suffered ever since. Do not his pictures always show best at second-hand? In engraving or in photogravure you lose the frigid artificiality of his colour as well as his wax-like surfaces, and are only conscious of that fine rhythm of line in which he undoubtedly excels. His greatest success has been achieved in black-and-white. His masterpieces are to be sought not on the walls of the Royal Academy or in the Museum at South Kensington but in the pages of the Dalziel Bible.

The President has also attempted sculpture, and with such an appearance of success that in the France of Dalou and Rodin they have awarded him a real Medal of Honour. His talent, indeed, is rather plastic than

graphic. Had he pursued sculpture with a tithe of the earnestness with which he has sought after excellence in painting, he might have produced something of real worth and distinction. As it is, his statues are only an outcome of learning and research—are, in fact, his pictures in the round. His mastery of anatomy and his knowledge of what has been done by his predecessors are beyond question. But for that touch of imagination which alone can convert the finished academical exercise into a great work of art—*that* is beyond learning, and *that* this most finished of students cannot impart.

According to Pope, ‘a little knowledge is a dangerous thing.’ To the painter or sculptor a great deal of knowledge is far more dangerous. Education, in the general sense, falls like a withering blight on the artistic temperament. A pint of observation is worth a peck of erudition. It is the painter’s business not to study the history of art but to help to make it. In their search for material, the man of letters, the scholar, delve in the literature of antiquity. The painter, once he has familiarised himself with the conventions of his art, as established by the practice of the great masters, must look for the rest in nature. Now, the President has chosen—or has not been able to avoid—the path of culture. He is not only intimately acquainted with the art of the Egyptians, Chaldeans, Greeks, and Romans, but he has the classics at his finger-ends. He can quote you Cicero, Juvenal, Petronius, Pliny with fluency and point, and in their own tongue too. More than this, he is not unacquainted with the idiom of Hellas, and is thus exalted high above the rest of his colleagues. It was to Shakespeare’s advantage

that he knew 'small Latin and less Greek,' and could the President repeat this boast with truth, his art might possibly have deserved a more flattering epithet than 'learned.' Nothing gives a better view of his limitations than the discourses he from time to time delivers at the Royal Academy. We have a right to expect from a painter that he should say something of the practice of his art, that he should 'direct the exertions of genius to their proper object.' Such, at any rate, was the purpose of Sir Joshua. But the President has preferred to cheer his students with ornate historical summaries. The artistic development of the Assyrians, Greeks, Etruscans is a subject which lends itself to rhetorical treatment; and Sir Frederick has displayed no mean skill in marshalling his facts and in officering them with appropriate quotations from 'politic authors.' His style, it is true, is somewhat unchastened. He can be guilty of such a Gothic welter of images as may be discovered in his warning that 'the day on which the deadening fumes of an insidious lust for gold cast their first blurring mists across the pure light of an artist's ideal, is the herald of a struggle on which hang not only the wreck or the triumph of his better self but also the marring or the maintaining in his art of whatever is that better self's reflection.' But eloquence (of a sort) he has, and his discourses only fail because he has nothing to tell which might not proceed from a common archæologist with no power of discriminating between a picture and a signboard.

PRINCE BISMARCK.

 HERE is no reason to think that when Prince Bismarck is no longer working in the 'roaring loom of time' he will seem less than he does now. Generations which look back on him will see him, as we see him, towering from the sword-hilt upwards over all his contemporaries. One man, and one only, in our time may stand beside him: the Italian Cavour. Undoubtedly he helped to make a small State a great one; he forwarded a mighty movement by which the world's history will be influenced for centuries; and his part in the work was such that we can safely assert that, had he not been there, Italy would have attained to her unity in a very different way, much later, and at a greater cost. But, after all, there was a smallness in Cavour: a slavery to formulas, a Savoyard readiness to intrigue, ignoble willingness to win by base means. In Bismarck there is none of all this. No man ever swallowed the formulas more completely than he: he has never intrigued; his means have been harsh at times, but they have never been ignoble. And his greatness is of the kind which puts him among the masters of mankind. It is that kind of greatness which endures beyond death—the greatness of Cæsar or Edward Longshanks, of Peter the Great and Richelieu and Chatham. And it is not the

least part of his glory that the great majority of those who are his peers won their way to rule by the sword, or were born kings entitled to obedience. He belongs to the very small class which, exercising only a delegated authority, has yet done as much as the revolutionary leader or the statesman born in the purple. In that choice class, too, he is one of the greatest. Our own Chatham was too closely hunted by fortune and health to be his equal: he could only set loose the arms of England, and leave her free to swing her trident. There is but one of whom we think as being in all ways Bismarck's peer, and that one is Richelieu.

But though it is easy enough to say what Bismarck is, it is nowise so simple to discover how he is what he is. Who shall tell that he has plucked out the heart of that mystery? There are words which come easily enough, but they give little help. Genius, which seems to explain everything, only begs the question. Courage, foresight, patriotism, undaunted resolution, tenacity in waiting, fierce promptitude of stroke: a child could rattle them off with ease. But when they are set down are we any nearer the portrait? They are but general terms after all, and the painter's duty is to find the unnameable something in themselves, and in the use of them, which is Bismarck. They might all be applied with perfect truth to a few of the Prince's contemporaries. Some of them are true of Gortschakoff, some of Beust, some of Thiers; and yet one instinctively feels how vast is the difference between the German Chancellor and any of these men. The Russian, the Saxon, the Frenchman, were conspicuous figures in their time. All three had character, and said and did

things the world does not easily forget ; but none the less when they are put beside the Pommeranian squire they look the merest shades. The words of even the best of them sound like simple repetitions, restatements of doctrines we all know, formulas which have been journalistic commonplaces for a generation and more. In Prince Bismarck's words there are no echoes and restatements : they are his and his only, and they are words that are deeds. His personal quality is something altogether apart. A mere catalogue of his actions is not much more profitable than a string of epithets. It is easy to say that he has been a student more remarkable for his zest of life than for his love of books ; that he has been a soldier to whom the dull routine of barrack-life was intolerable, to whom the army is a tool which he has used vicariously ; that he has been a diplomatist who thoroughly understood the unrivalled deceptive powers of the naked truth—who never lied and yet has always succeeded in making his opponents believe the thing which was not ; that he has been a devoted minister who ruled his master ; that he has been a Parliamentary leader who scorned Parliamentary life and has yet shown an unequalled faculty for Parliamentary manœuvring ; that he loathes eloquent writing and talking, and can yet write with slashing vigour and talk with impressive force ; that constitutional doctrines are a weariness to him, and that he can yet expound them with a convincing lucidity by which the oratory of the orthodox is pale. But once more, when we have said it all, have we defined Prince Bismarck ? Manifestly not. This sort of definition is like the chemical analysis of wine. You may do the scientifically necessary with a bottle of Romanée

Conti of '59; you may show that there is so much per cent. of this and so much per cent. of that; and then you know no better than before what the essential of the nectar is.

On the whole, the safest thing to say about Prince Bismarck is that he is as the best wine of the best year of a great vineyard: a gift of God, a something by itself in nature. Let us remember how rare is the possession of a marked personal character in combination with great intellectual power among statesmen: how very few of them are much more than a name to us little men. Now Prince Bismarck is as real not only to his countrymen but to the whole civilised world as the greater creations of the poet or the novelist: we feel him to be as much a person as Falstaff or Don Quixote or Dugald Dalgetty. His humour, his explosions of rage, his terrible phrases, his awful strength are known and felt by every man who has heard even a little of the life of the time. Whoever has gone a little further than hearsay, and has studied the Prince in the proper authorities, may have some faint approach to a conception of his greatness. By the proper authorities is meant not what other people have said about him, but what he has said about men and things himself. Take, for instance, his letters to Manteuffel and the work of his German Bozzy, Moritz Busch, whom we call a Bozzy *honoris causâ*. These two books are but part of the authorities, but they are enough to show the main features. There is one quality—for we must, however unwilling, attempt a definition of our man—which is conspicuously Bismarck's to be seen on every page of both. It is what Carlyle loved to praise as 'veracity.' Now, the person who requires to be told that this word covers more than a disinclination to fall into the vulgar error of telling lies is

beneath the reach of argument. Men who are able *not* to say the thing which is not are common enough. The rare man is he who can see a thing as it is. How many rulers of this or any generation have always estimated with precision the exact value of the men they had to deal with, the tools they had to use, the force they had to contend with? How many have set out unblinded by a theory, unhampered by some preconceived notion of what things ought to be, which made them incapable of seeing how things were? Not Gortschakoff; for he should have seen that Germany could not suffer Russia to have her way. Not Beust; for he struggled all his life in the vain hope of inducing Germany to run into a pretty little mould he had provided for her. Not Thiers; for he had a theory about the position of France which was found not to square with the facts. Bismarck has always had his idea how things ought to be, but it has never for one instant disturbed his power of looking at the nature of the problem with which he had to deal. Once only, when he made war on the Church of Rome, does he seem to have miscalculated the resisting power of his enemy, and even in this fight he avoided actual defeat.

For the rest, his victories have been the reward of sagacious calculation. The world, which sees how uniformly he has won, cannot help thinking that he has 'crossed the fight.' It is very difficult apparently for your sagacious observer to believe in that hard saying of Chatham's touching the sources of Oliver Cromwell's secret information. That a ruler should learn what was going to happen not by bribing secretaries but by estimating facts and characters accurately and by deducing from them the probable course of events, is a proposition

which the wire-pulling politician and the thoughtful journalist seem to find too hard of belief. And yet it is in this simple and unintriguing way that statesmen have commonly been right in their calculations and successful in their enterprises. In all the comedy of history there is nothing more delicious than the way in which the strong, simple man who sees the truth, who trusts his enemies to deceive themselves, who leaves the impossible unattempted and strenuously labours for the possible, sweeps all the rabble of dreamers and intriguers out of his way. Against the man of this stamp his enemies are for ever playing the famous *Journée des Dupes*. They plot, they wriggle, they lie, they pull wires, or in mere honest folly they league against him; they make a great pother; and then, when they are at one end of the chain and he is at the other, they are all dragged helplessly along as he wills that they should go. Many leagues of very clever fellows have taken part in various *Journées des Dupes* in which Prince Bismarck has played Richelieu.

The Prince's humour is one manifestation of his veracity. Who that looks honestly at the world can help seeing its absurdities? Bismarck has seen them as he has seen everything. If he had died at the end of his diplomatic service at Frankfort, if there had remained of him only his private letters to Manteuffel and his correspondence with his sister, we should still know that in the Germany of the first half of this century there had been a man of astonishing sagacity, intellect, and honesty. But he has lived to show those qualities in the greatest part on the greatest stage of his time; and we know that we have seen one of the race of the makers of history.

THE RIGHT HON.
WILLIAM E. GLADSTONE, M.P.

IT is a stock saying of the only prints that Mr. Gladstone is allowed to read that he is not only an ornament of the race at large, but also the Greatest Something or Other— orator, statesman, party leader, woodman, Homeric scholar, or what not, as occasion demands—that ever lived. There is no limit to the potentialities of human silliness; and it is possible that the statement is made in good faith: that to them responsible for its utterance it is as little susceptible of disproof as the existence of the sun. Possible, we say: but probable? Probable it is not; for look at the man's career from whatever point you may, the effect of it is invariable. He has lived to exhaust the capacity of Change, till beside him Mutability looks constant and the frailty of woman is firmness itself. There is scarce a principle but he has tried and found it wanting in adaptability, there is hardly an opinion but he has entertained and kicked it out of doors. He began as the hope of stern, unbending Toryism—(the fact is scarce more credible than that Toryism was ever unbending and stern)—and he has so far gone the round of what is called 'experimental conviction,' that at present he is busily en-

gaged in countenancing the degradation of that House where all his fame—his fame as distinguished from his notoriousness—was won, and in furthering the dismemberment of that Empire whose service has been his principal source of income, and a pensioner on whose bounty he has been more often and to better purpose than one cares at this juncture to recall. In other words, he has lived for himself and the hour, and has found it pay. To the dignity of the rarer immortality he has wilfully preferred those cheap heroic effects which are as it were the halfpenny journalism of renown; and after a lifetime in the service of humanity—(the phrase is peculiar to the good Gladstonian: who is sometimes impudent enough to add ‘and of his country’)—he is now supremely happy in the alliance of a set of ‘traitors to the Queen and rebels to the Crown.’ Moreover, the fashion of his happiness is that of the happiness of Mr. W. O’Brien contending for his breeches. He is conspicuous, and he believes himself a hero. He exults in all the circumstances of his humiliation, and is so content with the rumour and the publicity of his fall as to be unable to see that he is not a leader of men and a benefactor of his kind, but only a bamboozled and discredited old gentleman, the result of whose sixty years of Parliamentary life has been the ruin of his party and his own apotheosis as the tool of as shabby a set of politicians as ever dabbled in treason and shirked the consequences.

It would be pitiful if he were no longer an influence. But an influence he has always been, and an influence he will remain until the end. He has made more and greater mistakes than any living man, but he has survived them

all ; he has broken up majority after majority, yet he can still talk—and talk honestly, as we think—of a flowing tide ; he has parted with more convictions than anybody outside the Capitol of Washington has ever entertained and lived, and he is still regarded as a monument of consistency ; he has never boggled at misrepresentation, nor shrunk from calumny, nor hesitated at apology, nor refrained from identifying his own peculiar interests with the own peculiar interests of humanity, and to the faithful he remains the exemplar and the type of all the Virtues. It is impossible to admit that his intellect is more than third-rate ; for he has said no word that is worth remembering—has said no word, indeed, that even the most valiant of his dupes can recall—on any of the thousand and one subjects with which, in his hunger to be up and doing in the sight of men, he has chosen to concern himself. It is true, he once remarked that there were three courses open to the House, and that he has defined boycotting—(with or without intimidation)—as ‘exclusive dealing’ ; but even Dr. Tanner might have uttered the first of these epigrams, while to say that the second is not well within the capacity of any Radical journalist were to be monstrously unfair, and not to Mr. Gladstone. Is he an artist ? Then, how to explain his interest in *John Inglesant* and *Robert Elsmere* ? Is he a Hellenist ? Then why does the common scholar decline to take him seriously ? It may be urged that he is a writer, and the fact is that the bulk of his contributions to periodical literature is considerable, and that he is indefatigable in the production of post-cards touched with ambiguity and letters whose meaning none may know. But he has so small a

sense of style that even his orations are bad reading ; and what worse is there to say of one who began to write and speak some fifty or sixty years ago, and who has been speaking and writing ever since ? Is he respectable for his devotion to the veracities ? It may be so. Yet one retains a memory of his Dopping, and the knowledge that he once advised a poor untutored Irishman—(who had, it is true, accused him of lying)—to write a pamphlet and then he should be answered, and the reflection that in the case of Gordon of Khartoum he contrived to coin (and circulate) a distinction between ‘surrounded’ and ‘hemmed in’ ; and it is plain to one that the Gladstonian who, with all these responsibilities seething and bubbling in what he calls his brains, can yet claim for his venerable Chief the modest renown which attaches to him that tells the truth and shames the devil is scarce fitted to profit the State in any capacity at all. And when we come to the ‘service of humanity,’ that ancient and fish-like vaunt, the way to belief gets darker and thornier than ever. There is Majuba Hill, of course ; but the result of that was the degradation of Britain and the transfer of the opportunity of tyranny from Mr. Gladstone’s own countrymen, of whom he knew much good, to the Afrikander Boer, of whom he knew no good at all. Also, of course, there are Egypt and the Soudan ; but the effect of Egypt and the Soudan was to cost the Empire some thousands of lives, to imprint an indelible disgrace upon the scutcheon of Britain, to deprive the race of its noblest representative, to put the slave-trade on its legs again, and to give back Equatorial Africa to the man-hunter who had had his own sweet will of it so long. Equally, of course, there is the

'Hands off, Austria,' speech ; and there is the apology therefor. 'J'en passe, et des meilleurs' ; for at every step 'light thickens,' and the way gets worse, and the impression grows in strength that the Gladstonian who travels here in search of the inspiration of hero-worship must either be a common fool or must return a great deal more of a heretic than he went. And all the while, there sits the Sphinx, and grins at you in the thought of his unanswered riddle. You have sought conviction—even illumination—in this direction and in that ; and of every departure only bafflement has been the issue. You reflect that Mr. Gladstone has ever truckled to the mob ; has sometimes said the thing which is not ; has never hesitated to prefer himself to his country ; has never interfered in the affairs of humanity without humanity having to suffer for it ; has never been able to resist the opportunity of a Bulgarian Agitation ; has allowed himself to be bamboozled (always in the interests of mankind and never in those of Britain) by such shallow intelligences, such caricatures of authority, as Mme. de Novikoff and Mr. W. O'Brien ; has broken up his party time after time, and time after time has exterminated his majority. And you find yourself wondering if, after all, life is not a dream, and if, after all, the generality of mankind is anything but an aggregation of folly, vanity, dishonesty, mental incapacity, and supreme selfishness. There is Gordon of Khartoum, there are Penjdeh and Majuba Hill, there is the Special Commission ; and Mr. Gladstone is still a power ! So desperate is the dilemma that almost is one persuaded that the great, governing Anglo-Norman race has declined upon a future of vulgarity.

And that—if Mr. Gladstone's influence were worth considering in the eternal clash and coil of things—that in a sense were hideously true. His brains are those of a third-rate ecclesiastic ; his conscience is that of the man who reasons through appetite, and for whom his own desire is also the desire of the immortal gods ; his theory of duty excludes whatever is opposed to the pursuit of a course of ' conscientious ' self-advancement ; he is nothing if not self-conscious, self-sufficient, self-righteous ; he is the heroic incarnation of mediocrity, the complete expression of what is least civic and most personal in the British race. For—(his secret is not far to seek)—he has the genius of temperament. There is much in him of the strain of conquerors—he is of the stock of them that have subdued the world ; and it is written, perhaps, that with his abounding gifts—of voice, presence, magnetism, strength of self-worship, capacity of illusion, superiority to every consideration but the main chance—he shall so pervert them from their ancient religion of duty that unborn generations shall curse his very name. But, also, it is not perhaps so written ; and looking back on the heroic past of Britain, and those forces which have combined to make this strong, noble, and beneficent race—from Edward Longshanks and Robert Bruce on to Disraeli and Arthur Balfour—it seems impossible that the domination of one representative of the worst qualities of both its constituents—of English arrogance and self-sufficiency and Scottish greed and sentimentalism—should thus act to its prejudice. There is always India to govern, there is always Russia to meet and overcome, there is always Britain to live and die for, there is always the patriotic fibre of the ruck of

humanity to develop. And while this work is still to do, the example of the Minister who, with Gordon at his last gasp in Khartoum, could laugh at a Criterion farce, and but a little after appear as the practical ally of Ford and Sheridan and the actual apologist of them that cut the udders from living kine—such an example, we say, of the commonplace gone wrong is like to prevail but little.

WILLIAM THOMAS STEAD.



HE complex personality once known as 'that good man Stead' could neither have grown nor thriven outside the British Isles. It is the oddest blend imaginable, for it includes a good deal of Paul Pry, a good deal of Pecksniff, a touch of M. de Sade—('le grand Marquis,' as they call him *là-bas*: the prodigious Sentimentalist)—an infinite amount of Sunday-school Teacher, together with an arrogant want of breadth of mind impossible to parallel outside a provincial Little Bethel. In the old days of absolute monarchy it was a law unto all good citizens and true that 'the King could do no wrong.' This adage the editor of *The Pall Mall Gazette* did paraphrase and did apply unto himself. As thus: 'Whatever I, the editor of a moral and emotional print, and the most permanently influential Englishman of the Empire, undertake, must *ipso facto* be right.' Only one other principle can be said to have had any marked influence on his wild career. He devoutly believes that notoriety is fame, and that all things respectable to some—as modesty, good taste, conviction, truth, even profit—are as naught in comparison to bold advertisement. He has rarely expressed an opinion upon any serious topic which he has not ostentatiously—nay, virtuously—recanted afterwards. This is not surpris-

ing when you remember the never-shifting standard by which he estimates the capacities of public men. In the Minister who would seek shelter beneath the wing of him, the Nineteenth Century Messiah, two things are necessary: first, he must so far subordinate himself to his patron as to be ready to grant him an interview or betray him a state secret at any hour of the day or night; and second, he must take care never (no, never!) to break the Seventh Commandment. With the rest of the Decalogue he may live on a footing of the easiest familiarity; but unless the Angel of his House be honoured as be-seems a possible Mother of White Ribands and of Votes, the genius of that blackguard Pitt will avail him nothing. Perish the Empire rather than that he should lift a finger to save! For the rest, as becomes one who believed—or affected to believe—that his succession to the kingdom of Northumberland Street has received Divine Ratification, this eminent creature embarks (if one may say so) upon no enterprise, however dubious, without calling the attention of the world both to the sacrifice he deems it his duty to make and to the radiant self-righteousness which gilds the most suspicious of his actions. Thus, when he took it upon himself to flood the town with ‘revelations,’ he called out (in print) with Bishop Ridley: ‘Be of good cheer, for we have this day lighted up such a flame in England as I trust in God shall never be extinguished.’ One incident in that epic of false modesty was typical alike of the artist’s method and of his results. He confessed that, in decoying Eliza Armstrong from her parents, he aimed at proving that it was possible to do these things and never be found out,

And his experiment was a triple failure: the parents were unconscious of his noble purpose; the good man himself did not escape detection, but endured so much at the rude hands of the police that he has loathed them publicly ever since; while the principle of his memorable attempt was new to ethics then, and since has had to go uncountenanced outside the dark backward and abysm of morality from which it sprang.

His inconsistency is monumental. There is nothing to which he himself is prone but he has inveighed against the same sweet fault in others. More than once has he shrieked against the iniquity of manufacturing crime, and it is one of his maxims that outside Russia—(whose Czar has like himself the gift of transmuting all the baser experiences into the fine gold of virtue)—incitement to breach of the peace is never justified; yet he has somehow persuaded himself to forget that four or five short years ago he concocted an offence out of the most unpromising materials, and suffered for it like the common criminal of his own descriptions. In the publication of what may for fear of libel be described as ‘proper’ literature he easily surpassed the exploits of his only rival—the editor of a print that need not here be exhumed; yet he magnanimously denounced all those who either in print or at the music-halls have dared to utter a word that might not profit the little boys and girls of that conventicle he does himself adorn. Perhaps the good man was hurt by the infringement of what he may well have deemed his monopoly; yet such is his gift that it needed but the slightest provocation to untie his tongue. Or take the case of certain malefactors, ignominiously styled

'log-rollers,' against whom this hero once went forth upon a great crusade. These wretches were actually charged with writing and printing approval of each other's work. According to the crusader, this was their cry of battle: 'You scratch my back and I'll scratch yours'; and, having for years applauded the sayings and doings of them that were at one with him on the doctrines of the New Journalism, he revolted from the thought that the judgment of others should be as biassed as his own, and in a transport of individualism he supplemented the original adage with a second—also for personal use; and 'If you *don't* scratch my back,' he gallantly declared, 'I'll scratch your face.' The statement has gone uncontradicted that several men of letters who felt obliged to retire from the staff of *The Pall Mall Gazette* in the hour of its nicest morality were never able after to win its approval for so much as a single line.

But that 'what is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander' is no part of his creed. Once upon a time he imperiously demanded of several of his contemporaries that they should make the *amende* to an officious County Councillor. The word *amende* comes strangely from him, for he has always proved himself absolutely impervious to the idea it conveys. He may wound the feelings of a private citizen with some pure imagining, or persist in the vainest repetitions against a political opponent; but when was he not superior to apology? Most men eat their words with a certain air of humility; but when (as sometimes happens) he is bidden to a meal of his own utterances, he goes to it with all the insolence of an appetite which is also a virtue. His masterpiece remains

the denunciation, through number after number and edition upon edition, of the oppressor of the innocent Lipski. The facts are still fresh in the memory. Mr. Matthews, at the time of trial, had had the effrontery to thwart the sovereign will of *The Pall Mall Gazette* in an entirely different direction—that of the historical Miss Cass. An appeal was made to him as Home Secretary to respite the murderer. He saw no extenuating circumstances, and very properly declined to do more than postpone the execution for a week—declined, in fact, to be coerced into paltering with his conscience or betraying his trust; and this is how the good man assailed him. ‘We are getting on,’ wrote this epitome of more than the Christian virtues; ‘after legal robbery, legal murder. Mr. Matthews, the infallible Mr. Matthews, . . . seems to have decided to hang an innocent man pretty much as he decided to libel an innocent woman, on the evidence of accusers.’ And some days later: ‘Mr. Matthews is obdurate. He has got his back up, and, innocent or guilty, Lipski will hang on Monday.’ Then came Lipski’s confession; and ‘All’s Well that Ends Well,’ Mr. Stead announced in one of those radiant headlines of which he has the secret, and plunged forthwith into a leader that is still the envy of the Newer Journalism. ‘Lipski’s confession,’ said this knight-errant of the press, ‘fortunately removes all doubt that he has been justly accused, justly convicted, and justly executed. He has been hanged, and few criminals ever went to the gallows who better deserved their fate.’ To Mr. Matthews, who had for eight days been denounced as a murderer (and who was ever after the ‘discredited Minister’), no word of peni-

tence was offered. The good man ate his words, and exulted in the feast. And that was all.

With an intellectual and emotional agility that did him infinite credit he was able to combine the championing of Home Rule for Ireland with a devout enthusiasm for autocracy in Russia and all the works thereof. Once—in a burst of confidence—he promised to reveal the secret of the trick; but the inspiration never came. Some months of officialism in St. Petersburg and the suggestions of an ingenious diplomatist (of the other sex) enabled him to sit down and write in excellent provincial journalese *The Truth About Russia*. The truth, no less. ‘What is truth?’ says jesting Labby; and the good man gave him an answer after his own heart. The lackey is always the lackey, whether his master be demagogue or despot; and one may be a good man cringing to both yet no exception to the rule. It is fair to add that, as became an apostle, he had an ideal of life. Briefly stated, his ambition was to ‘nobble’ everybody downwards from the Queen, and to have an ear—hireling, if possible—at the universal keyhole. Lack of money alone prevented him from attaining to this culmination: it costs too much to have a private Stead on every pair of back-stairs in the world. But to pretend that an aim is achieved is comparatively inexpensive; and *To-Day’s Tittle-Tattle* appeared to be invented cheaply enough. And not only did he pack as much of his paper as he could spare from moral reflections with what to those who are not virtuous with the new virtue has the very flavour of scandal and eavesdroppery; but also when he had sold an edition on the strength of a piece of inven-

tion, or romanced himself into an 'extra,' he would fall to and outvaunt the universe. 'The Editor,' quoth he—
'the Editor is the Angel of Glory, the Angel of Prayer,
into whose ears are poured the cries, the protests, the
complaints of men who suffer wrong.'

O Democracy !

THOMAS KEITH.

IN more than one respect it is well that Thomas Keith was born to be a Modern Man. It is well for himself; because he is just the kind of person who, had he been born in the good old times, when witchcraft flourished, and convictions were practical and strong, would have had a fair chance of being burnt for a wizard, with the alternative of being worshipped as a saint. The barbarous people who at Melita showed the apostle Paul no little kindness, first thought he was a murderer whom vengeance suffered not to live, but then changed their minds, and said he was a god. So it would have been with Thomas Keith. A weird-looking, gaunt, silent man, blessed with a passionate desire to succour his kind, gifted with an absolute indifference to accepted opinion, possessed, 'as with a beneficent demon,' with an immense imaginative and intellectual courage that inspired him to attempt what seemed the impossible, and give himself up to the relieving of woes that looked beyond relief, he would have been burned on the Calton Hill or hanged in the Grassmarket had he failed: and had he succeeded, he would have been beatified, and perhaps have had a little altar of his own in the Moray Aisle of St. Giles's. And he would so far have deserved his fate, for he has

none of the worldly wisdom of the trimmer; he is the antithesis of them that hedge and take precautions. He would not have called in the King's chirurgeon to consult with him beforehand, nor would he have warned all the gossips that the case was nearly hopeless. He would not even have visited a bad result upon his assistants or the weather. He would simply have done his very best to ensue success, without asking advice from any one. He would have fed and nursed his case with his own hands, and nearly broken his heart that all was done in vain. And afterwards he might have had some wild heretical theory to account for the bad issue: that the King's own chirurgeon, who had seen the operation and disapproved, had brought in infection in the miniver of his cloak or in his pouncet box—his anti-plague.

It was well for us of this generation; for Thomas Keith is the representative in Scotland of that group of brilliant scientific surgeons who have practically revolutionised their art. In this decade we have been stock-taking. In no branch of science or art has the advance been more astounding, and the result to mankind more important, than in certain branches of operative surgery and in the principles which guide the surgeon in his treatment of wounds and disease. Thirty years ago a large class of surgical tumours in women were badly understood, and were practically removed from treatment. Here, in Edinburgh, and elsewhere bold men were trying experiments; and the result had been so dubious, and the consensus of the older surgeons was so hostile, that to take up the work it required both courage and self-denial. But Keith felt that taken up it must be. With no

hospital appointment at his back ; with the countenance of a very small minority of the profession ; at his own expense and risk, and sustained by his own personal devotion—he operated on one poor woman after another, ever increasing his technical knowledge and dexterity, always learning from his difficulties, profiting by his errors, and still diminishing his mortality, till he made Edinburgh a centre of both teaching and of healing. After his first twenty or thirty cases, he read, in admirable Saxon-English, a paper to his professional brethren on his work ; and an epoch-making thing it was. None present but must still retain the profound impression, as he told how he had been compelled to take up the great work, and recounted the difficulties and the dangers he and his patients had overcome. From that evening progress was assured. The confession carried conviction ; old prejudices and theories were swept away as in the blast of a great wind ; Keith became the master-authority on this matter, not only for Scotland but for other lands. It is not for us to tell in detail the enormous gain to suffering women that has accrued from his practice and teaching. Many of his pupils have learned from him to be teachers, and, in their turn, inventors ; and when the time came it was found that Edinburgh could spare him—even Thomas Keith !—to London.

There were much to say of his quaint and taking individuality : of his weird, sad, long-haired face and dreamy eye ; of his northern speech, with his occasional lapses from the diction of culture into the broadest Doric. But, being still with us—who owe him so much, and to whom his life and work are so excellent and shining an ex-

ample of what a good, strong man may do—he is not yet public property; and *The Scots Observer* is not a society journal. But it is lawful and pleasant to note that in many points his surgical history has been remarkable. As a rule those who have achieved great names as surgeons and great fame as consultants follow the same path to success. They early in life thus choose their line; they are attached to an hospital; they teach their special subject in a medical school; they take their opportunities of writing books or pamphlets. If they have the natural gift, or have acquired the proper knowledge, being in the right way, they gradually attain to eminence; practice makes perfect; their pupils become practitioners, and they, their old masters, are called as consultants in the need of a second opinion. Other men read their books, and perhaps the public hears the names of them; and so, legitimately and honourably, are reputations made and fortunes achieved. Others (and these are chiefly physicians) leap to consultant rank from the springboard of a great general practice, are the servants and the healers of many, and in this way win themselves a character for experience and practical wisdom which appeals alike to the ignorant public and to the puzzled profession. Probably out of the abundance of their experience they also write books, and probably their books are mostly practical. Here in Edinburgh Syme and Spence were types of the first, while Abercrombie, Davidson, and the elder Begbie were examples of the second. Now, Keith's career has been on altogether different lines. After a distinguished hospital and undergraduate experience, the aim of which was chiefly surgical, he drifted into

general practice (with a special liking for aural disease), and he must have been nearer forty than thirty when the real work of his life began. Even then he was attached to no hospital; and it was not until his fame had grown to be world-wide, that the Managers of the Royal Infirmary (Edinburgh) were moved to put a certain number of beds at his disposal. Again, he did not teach himself into repute: he has never given a course of lectures; it is by the bedsides of his cases, or within the four walls of his study, that the priceless information which men come from all parts of the world to seek is yielded up to them. And still less has he printed himself into immortality, for his writings on his own subject are few and brief, while his controversial notes on disputed points of treatment (and in the less worthy direction of personal or professional polemic), though written with fire and spirit—for he can wield both mace and rapier—are the merest ephemerides, and his reports upon his work are priceless to his successors alone. It was the high courage that avoided no difficulty however enormous it bulked, and declined no problem however hopeless of solution it appeared; it was the extraordinary measure of success that rewarded a personal devotion to the point at issue, and a temperamental outlay that were more extraordinary still; it was the high-hearted simplicity with which Keith met his difficulties, his failures, and his successes alike—it was these qualities, among others, that showed Scotland and the world that here was a master of his art, and therewith a hero among men. And in this connection there is yet another thing to tell of him. That were a poor and insufficient notice of his work which took

no count of the fact that it has been done in the teeth of bad health and great bodily suffering: that often has he operated when he was himself unfit to stand, and his own case seemed as bad as his patient's.

London has more Scotsmen than Edinburgh, and they can hold their own anywhere; but, when the century's great names in surgery come to be written, among the Scotsmen in London or in Scotland there will be few greater than that of Thomas Keith.

SARASATE.

N an excellent article contributed to Sir George Grove's *Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, Herr Paul David includes a pedigree or chart of the artist dynasties sprung from Corelli and Tartini, the great all-fathers of the tribe of such as utter their message through the violin. Of the latter—a descendant of the Venetian Vivaldi through the Florentine Veracini—the stock is now, it would seem, extinct; while the seed of Arcangelo Corelli has increased and multiplied until it fills the world. Herr Wieniawski is, it is true, like Herr Wilhelmj a result of the School of Mannheim—the sun of which is Spohr; Lady Hallé is the second in descent from a certain Jansa whose relations to the greater centres of inspiration do not appear to have been defined; Paganini and Ole Bull in the past were self-created and (save for Sivori) self-contained. Now Corelli was the master of Somis, who was the master of Pugnani, who was the master of Viotti, who was the master of Rode, who was the master of Böhm, who was the master of Ernst and Dr. Joachim and all them that proceed from the School of Vienna; while as for the School of Paris, Alard was the pupil of Habeneck, who was the pupil of Baillot, who was the pupil of Viotti, who was the pupil of Pugnani; so that as Martin Sarasate was

the pupil of Alard, he represents, not less than his famous and learned rival, the tradition and ideal of him who did most for the glory of the violin. Nor is this all. At a certain point in time the rival dynasties touch hands and mingle fortunes. The Hungarian and the Spaniard are both of the legitimate descent of Pugnani. Now Pugnani learned his art not only of Somis but of Tartini; and thus it comes to pass that, Viotti aiding, their titles to the royalty of the most human of all instruments are as complete as pedigree can make them.

'First musician, then violinist,' says Herr David of Dr. Joachim; and 'first violinist, then musician' we say of Señor Sarasate. Of course he is a musician to the tips of his fingers; but he is before all else the man of his instrument. He has the true temperament of the virtuoso. You would say that his violin is not a means of uttering the words of others but the voice of his own genius. He plays as the nightingale sings—the nightingale, artist of the woods: for the mere delight of playing and because in that way only can his abounding and enchanting self be brilliantly and naturally expressed. And this we take to lie at the heart of his prodigious success. What he lavishes upon his audience is not so much Beethoven nor Mendelssohn nor Max Bruch nor Lalo as Sarasate. The personal equation between the man and the instrument is so complete that the two are nothing if not a single individuality. In the same way the great actor—Kean or Salvini or Frédérick—produces not his author but himself. The words are another's, it is true; but they are clothed with his voice, they flash with the lightnings of his glance, they are fiery with his

inspiration, they live in his gesture and his look, they are filled with himself, and without that charge of energy they were so much verbiage and no more. At the moment it matters nothing who wrote them nor what they are in themselves. They may be Shakespeare's and fall dead; or they may be Denner's and breathe the magic of celestial harps or the terror of the trumpets of the night. And at need he can do without them altogether: can stretch forth his hand, and make your heart leap in your body; can look at a glass of wine, and thrill you to an ecstasy of horror with a suggestion—silent yet irresistible—of murder and of blood. That is the actor. He lives for us and moves us in exact proportion as his personality is vigorous and abounding. His author is but a pretext; the material in which he works is the voice, the presence, the face, the imagination, the energy, the passion, and the genius that combine to make up the individual which is called Frédérick or Salvini or Kean. It is something the same with a certain type of virtuoso—as Liszt (they say) and Rubinstein and Sarasate. Here is his author, and there his public; between the two is himself; and of the three the one whose opportunity is most urgent and imperious is neither the public nor the author. It is advanced as a reproach against Sarasate that he is not too curious in his music; that he will as lief sing you a Spanish dance as an adagio of Beethoven, and is wicked enough to expend as much genius upon Lalo and Max Bruch as on the eminent Mendelssohn himself. But even if it be just—and we are by no means prepared to admit that much—the reproach is merely wooden-headed. Dr. Joachim in that wonderful *Chaconne* of the innumerable

variations, is an admirable and beautiful experience, no doubt. The musician is Bach; the music is a prodigy of ingenuity, learning, brilliance, treatment, intellect; the performance is something to remember with pride and a certain austere delight in the reflection that one was more or less on a level with the player and the thing played. But art is nothing if not sensuous; and Sarasate is an artist—one had almost said *the* artist of the violin. Mr. Henry James once confessed that, immoral though it were, he would go nightly to his Salvini, though Salvini (in very choice Italian) were supported by a company of Hottentots; and Mr. Henry James was right. The great thing is to get your artist; even as the next is to enjoy him when you have got him. And there are numbers of good folks (one is glad to think) who would go and listen with rapture to Sarasate if he played them nothing more intellectual than *The Old Folks at Home*, or were degraded enough to select as an excuse for self-expression the flagrant 'immoralities in sound' of the impostor Rossini.

For, the truth is, he plays the violin with a gusto, an inspiration, an accomplishment that belong to him alone. His command of his instrument is complete, and to hear him in a *prestissimo* is an experience that even in these Ibsenistic days makes life worth living. And then, while the artist is nothing if not elegant, refined, consummate, the man—the temperament presented by and through the artist—is nothing if not dæmonic in influence and a veritable enchanter in effect. 'Has he a devil, think you?' some one said of Dr. Joachim; and the answer was that he had, but it was a Protestant (or Lutheran) devil—a devil that would sit in pews. Now, Sarasate's devil is a

pagan, and, his aims being merely beauty and delight, he had far rather promote a rapture than suggest an idea. And in his master's hand the violin becomes the loveliest of voices, and sings with a penetrating sweetness, a poignancy of expression, a beauty and a volume of tone, that make one exult in sense and rejoice exceedingly in art. What's intellect to him that listens, and what's he to intellect? What are all the meanings of all the literary colourists and all the philosophers in sound to an achievement in emotion such as this? The adagio is distilled in a linked sweetness as of honey falling from the comb; the scherzo frolics forth in an irresistible hurry, a riot of abandonment, with an infernal recklessness and charm. And not for an instant does the artist disappear. Before you there are always tact, temper, the perfection of method, the absolute of means and end; for before you is Sarasate, and Sarasate is one of the kings of art.

LORD WOLSELEY.



APTAIN, orator, Irishman, politician, practitioner, poet—it is no easy thing to catch a character thus brilliantly variegated ; but that mighty fire-raising engine, the Press, has so pumped upon the edifice of Lord Wolseley's fame that the way seems cleared to the inner shrine. Justice has on the whole been done ; but the poet in him has somehow been dissembled, the fact being that hitherto his nice valour has avoided rhyme. But the poet's ' inventive music ' is no more indispensable to progressive man than the common sense discountenanced after Pope and altogether rejected and despised since Byron ; and he is a tame historian who in Lord Wolseley overlooks the epic artist of *The Soldier's Pocket-Book* and the lyrist of *The Fortnightly Review*. Nor in taking stock of the poet shall you miss the man. Books have at least this quality : if they lie, detection is simply a matter of time. The poet's land it is that really contains the Palace of Truth ; and Lord Wolseley being *très fort*, as the French say with their own fine shade of meaning, it is the more fortunate that he should have been prodigal of written and spoken poetry. The examination thereof should be instructive ; for though it be true that there have been soldier-authors to whose writings one looks only for some confirmation of their character as

declared upon the tented field, it is also true that none of these were poets in the potential mood. Napoleon is excepted, of course; but Napoleon is an exception all round, and for obvious reasons it would be invidious here to do more than refer to him.

The facts of Lord Wolseley's career—which has been brilliant, serviceable, and conspicuous—in no way contradict the assumption. He has gone up the ladder rung by rung in the teeth of much opposition. He has been an ambitious, an active, and a fortunate soldier, from the date of his first commission in the 80th Foot to the days when from the telegraph clerk's room at Korti he wired to a great and good Minister in his box at the Criterion the particulars of that ineluctable day at Khartoum. But he never was disposed so far to undervalue the solidities of his profession as to sacrifice them to his muse. He was always too clever and too fond of work to attempt to rise without intense and serious effort. But from first to last the sacred impulse—which makes the bard)—has been too much for him: has constrained him to be always expressing his poetic self poetically; with something perhaps of the licence of the amateur, but assuredly with not more of it than makes the charm of some professionals. That he has thus distributed a certain glamour over his career is true enough; true also that the said glamour has not been lacking in effect. But transfiguration has ever been the main business of the poet, from Pindar and Sophocles down to Dagonet and Carlyle; and Lord Wolseley, his hero once allowed, has borne himself like the best of his innumerable and immense forebears. Homer's hero was Achilles; Lord

Wolseley's is Baron Cairo. The difference is merely epochal.

To the proof. In the maiden preface to *The Soldier's Pocket-Book*, first edition—(a preface still printing)—you will find these words: 'No claim is made on the score of literary merit'; and in these, as we affirm, Lord Wolseley the poet stands confessed. As the critic knows, in setting them down he was employing one of the commonest poetic artifices. Was there ever, in effect, a poet—a modern poet at least—who did not either confess his love for art and the Muse, or represent himself to his readers as one innocent of artifice even to the point of being a monument of artlessness? In Lord Wolseley's case the phrase is significant; for who but the poet innate and hidden expected literary merit from the author of *The Soldier's Pocket-Book*. How to conceive the great Duke or the greater Julius sitting down to pen a little foreword, and anticipating with a blush the soft impeachment of dalliance with the Muse? And when Lord Wolseley's poetic bias has been established, a wonderful simplification takes place; for all his public sayings and doings crystallise about it, and a handful of diamonds becomes a difficult study by comparison. Certain eccentricities are inseparable from the poetic faculty or inspiration—certain licences which, in spite of the well-feigned surprise of writers interested in keeping alive old literary or quasi-literary controversies, are familiar to the common observer of human nature; and of these Lord Wolseley the poet has availed himself to the full. Among them are self-consciousness or vanity—(the root of heroism)—lyrical fervour, the prophetic impulse, a certain inconstancy in matters of

theory, and a certain feebleness in matters of action. The kind of strength that enables a man to march in cold weather upon hot water and tea-leaves, or to bear 'the wild life one has to lead in the field when cut adrift, perhaps entirely, from civilisation, but at any rate from cooks, clubs, tailors, and bootmakers' (*vide* aforesaid *Maiden Preface*) is adequate in a common soldier, but not in a leader of men; and Lord Wolseley's conspicuous position and high claims make ordinary strength in him little better than ordinary weakness in others. At Korti, the supreme moment of his career, General Lord Wolseley showed himself no more abounding than the weakest of poets in the fortitude of the great commander. In a campaign against a horde of savages and fanatics there was neither room for nor profit in posing as a strategist; there was nothing to do at Korti beyond the capacity of a decent staff officer; he might have had for the asking half a regiment of generals from Pall Mall or Calcutta to look to communications. His place—and none will gainsay it—was at Abou Klea and Gubat, above all at Metemneh, to see that there was no delay of hours, much less of days, after the arrival of those steamers. Orders from the Government, quotha! *That* Government? It is with a stronger impulse of worship than ever that one thinks of Nelson's blind eye. And, in effect, if Lord Wolseley had but cut his own telegraph wires, discovered that his presence was urgently needed elsewhere, devolved the command, and pushed on to Abou Klea, how differently it would all read now!

It is certain that upon no other occasion has he been required to act in character. Tel-el-Kebir—the official

biography, by the way, stops there—was admirable as a brilliant and fortunate field-day, an agreeable excursion for certain incomparable troops not rashly exposed since the Alma. But was it anything more? And if even Von Moltke is something of a cabinet soldier—a soldier always fighting with luck and the odds at his back—how does Lord Wolseley rank? One returns inevitably to the fact that once he was seriously tried, and then he was found wanting. For the rest, much need not here be said about him. Always more obviously politician than poet, he is scarce to be reproached with trimming at the proper time. And yet for inconstancy he puts all but the Master and Sir William into the shade. His Liberal departmental speeches had for a burden—to parody a poet whose voice we shall not hear again—something like this:

‘Wolseley’s in office,
All’s right with the world.’

They may be compared to his Conservative orations in which our military nakedness is exposed. Again his feeling for names—(all poets are nominalists)—gives what acrostic-mongers call a light: it compelled him to strip the line regiments of their historical numbers. This may partly account for his unpopularity; as also may the fact that he has never threatened to resign, nor even worked up a little unpleasant friction, either to avert a really mischievous measure or to further a really useful one.

Nothing, writes our poet in a moment of special inspiration, ‘is more pitiable to see than a G.O.C. galloping

about endeavouring himself to personally direct the movements of regiments and brigades. The general's mind should be clear and cool, so that he may be able to grasp the real and true condition of affairs, and so be in a position to decide quickly and positively what steps he should take next.' Here, of course, is 'the seeing eye,' the note of imagination, the poetic vision. But is it not just a little excessive and superfluous? Is it not much as if our Only Literary Cricketer were to shout to the Oxford Eleven to keep their stumps up during the first over if they mean to make many runs? Again, at his lyrical best in *The Fortnightly* Lord Wolseley is full of the joy of battle and that kind of thing. It is pure poetry, of course; but how remote from the temper of some great English captains who have hated the dire necessities of war! And after all the most fatal expression of Lord Wolseley's poetic gift is his trick of dropping into prophecy. Let but the shouting begin, and at once he becomes the *sacer vates*, and the public is told that not only has he spoken cheerfully of victory, but has foreseen everything even to the time when and the place where the other general will offer up his discredited and unavailing sword. This may be—and is—magnificent; but is it war? To contrast with it the stately exculpatory despatch which Sir Arthur addressed to the miserable Portuguese Government—(challenging his position behind Torres Vedras!)—is to have one's doubts, and to reflect that after all the present epoch and the New Journalism are pretty well matched.

W. G. GRACE.

IT is hard to arrive at a comparative estimate of greatness. We cannot weigh bishop and batsman, juggler and general, in the same balance. Yet if he be truly great who, rightly gauging his own powers from the first, pursues his aim with singleness of heart and resolutely achieves that which he sets before him, then Dr. Grace may rank with the prime heroes of these times. His career, though it has left the fates of nations unchanged, has been one long march of triumph. For the last quarter of a century he has devoted himself to the work of cutting records and outdoing all his predecessors in the cricket-field. To say that he is the greatest cricketer that the world has seen is but to give a ghostly echo of the praise which belongs to him. He has so far outdistanced his competitors that there is none worthy to stand by his side. His greatness may not be fitly measured by the powers he has displayed in one match or in one year, but by the marvellous endurance and persistence which have enabled him to remain so long the champion at the game. At times his splendour has been overshadowed; some isolated feats of his have been eclipsed; but if we look at the sum of his accomplishment, we can only bow down before his

greatness, and say with confidence that as man never did the like before so man shall never do the like again.

It was in 1864 that he made his first appearance in a big match. He was then a boy of sixteen, who was thought scarce worthy to represent South Wales against the Gentlemen of Sussex. But he scored 170, and his position as a batsman of the very highest rank was never after questioned. Between 1864 and 1886 in first-class matches he made no less than 30,122 runs, which gives him an average of $44\frac{1}{2}$ runs per innings during a period of twenty-three years. The simple eloquence of these figures is irresistible. It is a difficult matter to realise the effect which W. G.'s advent had upon the national game. He may fairly be said to have revolutionised cricket. There were men of prowess before him: W. Lambert, Alfred Mynn, and Fuller Pilch—each of these heroes has great scores to his credit. But it was the incomparable skill and strength of the Doctor which first made centuries mere everyday events. And as he grew in power and showed the world that one man might go beyond 200, ay and beyond 300, and give no chance, the bowlers of England had good cause of dismay. Cricket became little more than a contest between W. G. on the one side and the bowling strength of the world on the other. Before 1868 the Players had long been supreme. The Gentlemen had lacked organisation; and though from time to time they were more than a match for their adversaries so far as batting was concerned, yet the Players' better skill in bowling, the result of years of patient practice, was always enough to turn the fortune of the game. And then came the Doctor, and by his

own surpassing genius for cricket brought Victory to perch on his shoulders. It was in vain that the best of all bowlers, from J. C. Shaw down to Lohmann and Briggs, exhausted their artifice: century followed century, and in match after match the Gentlemen were triumphant. The services which the Doctor has rendered to his country are incalculable. In 1870, from the cricketer's point of view, Gloucestershire had no existence. Seven years later she defeated All England by five wickets. And the credit for this marvellous result was due solely to the indomitable energy and brilliant all-round play of the three Graces.

As W. G., his head in the well-known M.C.C. cap, walks from the pavilion to the wicket, he looks loose-limbed and almost shambling. But when he has taken guard and set himself seriously to defend his wicket, his pose becomes monumental in strength and immobility. No one has ever faced the ball with keener glance or a nobler confidence. He plays with the straightest bat in Christendom. So close are his hands held to his legs that daylight may not be seen between them. His toes are advanced as far towards the wicket as can be without running the risk of an l.b.w. As the ball leaves the bowler's hand, he stands at his full height, his bat as straight as ever, and meets it with the air of one to whom fear and uncertainty are strangers. His left foot he may advance if the length of the ball demands it; his right never moves a hair's-breadth from its place. In defence he is as stubborn as the Guards at Waterloo; yet in energy and dash his defence surpasses the attack of others. The ball may never be said to hit his bat; it

is always his bat that strikes the ball. When playing against time he has been known to score rapidly at the beginning of an innings; but he generally opens with caution, not caring to risk all for a momentary success. And when he is once thoroughly set, his control over the ball is complete. In such perfect consonance are hand and eye that he can convert the swiftest yorker into an easy full pitch. The most difficult balls on the leg-stump—balls which any one else would be proud to stop—he puts away with ease for a couple of runs. This remarkable stroke has been the envy of many a great batsman, and has brought destruction upon hundreds of imitators. No less astonishing is his skill in ‘placing.’ He leaves nothing to chance. In his best days he could always calculate to an inch the direction the ball would travel. There is a personal equation between himself and his weapon: he twists the leather with his bat, as a billiard-player twists the ivory with his cue. ‘I put the ball where I please,’ said old J. C. Shaw, who had taken the Doctor’s wicket more often than any bowler of his day, ‘and *he* puts it where *he* pleases.’ Has genius ever received a finer tribute from an opponent? On one occasion, for the United South Eleven against a Twenty-two Grimsby and District, he made a solid Four Hundred. The bowling was not first-rate, it is true, but only the Doctor could have got the ball past twenty-two fieldsmen and given no chance until he had scored 350. And like all men of genius, he performs his appointed task without the slightest hurry or discomfort. He is conscious of his strength, and he does not overtax it. At the end of a long day, when the other side is all worn

out with leather-hunting, W. G. seems untouched with fatigue. In his old days of 'Egyptian immobility,' of 'Memnonic fixity'—the days when no man's skill prevailed against him—he could score 200 off his own bat and then go on to bowl with only the briefest interval of rest. In nothing does he display his husbandry of strength so much as in his running. He never hurries across the pitch, yet when his big voice has called (and everything about the Doctor is big—voice, beard, stature, effect), he seems to have changed ends without an effort before his partner has started. Of course he has always been aided by his wonderful endurance. Other men have been known to play as well as he does for a day, but he is alert the whole season through. When he is at his worst his activity outstrips that of all his rivals; at his best he does feats which before him were deemed superhuman. He once (it was in 1876) made 839 runs and took fourteen wickets in eight days. Setting aside the mastery which made such an achievement possible, and regarding it only as an exhibition of physical strength, we must still allow it to be without parallel.

His style is impersonal in its greatness. It is distinguished by breadth and ease and by the absence of any littleness or flourish. No run is ever got by mere *ficelle*. Some players—as Mr. A. G. Steel—display a rarer grace, a more ravishing variety of pose, than the Doctor. But the Doctor has long ago taken the game out of the region of experiment, and accomplishment is more to him than elegance of gesture. A fine innings by W. G. is as complete a performance as a play by Sophocles or a picture by Claude. To lavish praise upon it is idle; you accept it as a masterpiece in silence. And like a true artist W. G.

loves cricket for its own sake. Whether the game be uphill or down matters not a jot to him. His spirit never flags; his energies are always at the highest pitch. No adversary ever gave him the advantage of a mistake without regretting it. At the same time it is a noteworthy quality in his play that he scores more readily from good than from indifferent bowling. His average has almost always been higher in first-class matches than in games played in moments of leisure against second-rate teams.

Nor let it be supposed that he is a specialist in the game. For the last ten years, it is true, his performances as a bowler have not been brilliant. Yet in the earlier part of his career he wrought wonders with the ball. From 1872 to 1877 he met with miraculous success; and an analysis of his bowling during twenty-three years shows that he took 1996 wickets at the trifling cost of 15 runs a wicket. Many have done as well as and better than this for a few years: but who has so good a record for so long? And then his speed and accuracy in the field are notorious. There is a legend (it will scarce meet with credence), that his brother, E. M., once caught a man at short leg off his own bowling! It is certain that W. G. can boast of no such miracle as this, but very early it is told in Lillywhite's *Annual* that his fielding at long leg was magnificent.

For five-and-twenty years he has been the foremost cricketer of his time. And though he is now somewhat past his zenith, he has not left the game where he found it. By his genius he has built up a great tradition which will endure as long as there are Englishmen to wield the willow.

MR. JUSTICE HAWKINS.



NOT a big man, yet well-made and sternly handsome, wearing his robes as if born to them, and speaking in tones of uncommon clarity and calm—that is your first impression of Mr. Justice Hawkins on the judgment-seat. In appearance he is the ideal judge, for he realises Lord Bacon's conception, 'a lion under the throne.' Yet (like Janus) his Lordship has another face; and until that, too, has been told unto you, your impression is incomplete. Transport yourself to the Heath at Newmarket; enter the charmed enclosure, even the Holy of Holies; and there shall you fall in with one in rough tweeds and a neckerchief by which the rainbow and the tail of the peacock seem colourless and unvariegate, and in charge of a bull-pup and a strong cigar. If the Virgil to your Dante be a book-maker—a commission agent, to speak by the card—he will whisper you with loving admiration that this is 'Sir 'Enery 'Awkins'; and if the 'saut tear' does not 'dim his ee' as he thinks of *Read v. Anderson*, and the Betting Act with the sting taken out of it, and his profession made not only possible but profitable, then does gratitude no longer inspire the sons of men. A contrast so piquant, so engaging—('How pleasing Atterbury's softer hour'!)—has naturally impressed the

popular imagination, and numbers of quaint yet seductive myths have accresced about this alluring personality. Thus it happened that, during a certain combat of two whose ropes and stakes were pitched in France, Mr. Justice Hawkins was detained at home by a trifling accident. Now, it was his turn to sit at chambers, and there instantly arose a rumour—devoutly cherished by every attorney's clerk in attendance—that with burning heart and in some weird disguise he had crossed the Channel hand-in-hand with the loving, black-browed Night, and even then was shouting the song of battle while Sullivan and Charley Mitchell, the mud-boltered, the not-to-be-overtaken, pursued each other valiantly across the clay. Moreover, some days after Sir Henry appeared in court with a little mark of injury upon his face; and how to dispute the legend after *that*? Most truly may it be said that when Rumour enters to discourse of him she is painted not 'full of tongues' but full of paragraphs in the sporting papers.

But if sport be his Lordship's distraction, at least it is the only one he has. He takes no interest in politics, nor science, nor literature—even the literature of law; and it is to other occupants of the bench that you must look for a *History of the Criminal Law* or a classic treatise on *Partnership* or *Specific Performance*. This by no means signifies that he does not know his subject, for he knows it very thoroughly and well. The son of a solicitor, he has ever lived in a legal atmosphere; he was 'called' early; he succeeded early; his success was a result of hard work as well as good capacity; he figured in a long array of famous cases. It is more important to note that

his decisions are rarely reversed; that both public and profession repose full confidence in his powers; and that you have but to listen to him—especially in criminal cases—to learn that he has not only a firm grasp of principle, but the gift of applying principle to the concrete issue in hand. Like many other eminent judges he is not—it is worthy of passing note—a university man; but this loss, if loss it be, is also a gain. At least Sir Henry is no pedant, and at least he has not put off nor forgotten the nature of average man. No judge has a clearer or a keener insight into the springs of human action than he. Withal he is a little pessimistic and a trifle too suspicious; but he knows his Old Bailey and he knows his Turf, both which institutions—though not exactly ‘the noblest nurseries of humanity and liberty in the kingdom’—have yet their value and their use. Of course your judge is eternally being confronted with the baser aspects of human nature; for even in civil cases the dispute is rarely quite an honest one, and to supervise what is after all a constant jargoning of lofty pretences in unnatural and cynical conjunction with the practice of degraded facts is an experience that hardly makes for edification. It is interesting, though, this disease of mind, as disease of body is interesting to a physician, and there is a certain intellectual pleasure in tracing out and discovering the innumerable wiles of knaves; and the proof is that Sir Henry, his knave once well in hand, will often seem less judge than advocate. He does not believe in and he never gives you a charge that is merely colourless, for he will throw his whole force upon one side and be at great pains to carry the jury along with him. To be more advocate

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than judge—that is his failing. His chief gift is keenness of intellect; his vision takes him far ahead of his company; he is exceptionally fond of drawing distinctions; and these qualities it was that made him one of the best artists in cross-examination the English bar has ever known. He was for the defendant in the once famous convent case of *Saurin v. Starr*, and his handling of the plaintiff is still remembered as a masterpiece. In cross-examination the art is not to expose a lying witness—for exposure is comparatively easy—but to take the honest enemy and make him bear unwilling testimony to the weakness of his own case. On points where he is strong he must be left alone, though even here you may ingeniously confound him with an unexpected distinction. Of course this has nothing to do with justice, but—the advocate's duty being to win his case—justice is plainly no concern of his; or, to put it brutally, the worse the case you win the greater your honour in winning it. Now, as no judge may cross-examine—at least in detail—Sir Henry's fairest talent is thrown away. A characteristic of his, when at the bar, was the capacity of making the most of every jot and tittle in his own favour. In the Tichborne case, for instance, he was junior counsel for the defendant in the civil action, and he led for the Crown in that criminal trial, whose record exists in some seven thousand mighty pages of print; and by comparison he alone of all that were engaged was brief. His opening fills three hundred pages, his summing-up of the case for the prosecution five hundred more; yet assuredly he missed nothing. These speeches are not literature: the sentiment is either false or commonplace, and the rhetoric

is tawdry, but the speaker knew his audience. The typical fool is not he that hath no pearls to cast away, but he that casteth them that he hath before swine. On fit occasions Sir Henry has done far higher and rarer work: as his judgment in *The Queen v. Clarence*, a recent case from the Old Bailey in the Court of Crown Cases Reserved, exists to show. The details are unfit for discussion here; and it must be enough to say that Sir Henry was chief of the few judges in favour of sustaining the conviction, and that his judgment is a piece of clear and potent reasoning, expressed in simple yet vigorous language, and lighted up at the close by a 'gravely eloquent touch not unsuited to the majesty of that tribunal to which it was addressed.

But this was an extraordinary effort; for in general Mr. Justice Hawkins is fond of 'larking'—(there is no other word for it)—so that the common routine of work appears distasteful to him. Like the girl in the sham Scots song, he 'canna, winna buckle to.' He has a vile habit of being behind time, which 'sweet fault' has led him so far as to be something of a scandal. Also, he will burst to the minute upon the silence of an empty court, strike out all the cases in the list on the ground of everybody's non-attendance, and vanish for the day. Or he will set himself—still with an air of benevolence and a smiling interest in the sufferers—to anger counsel with sarcastic remarks, bemuddle witnesses with cunning questions, and perplex his jurors by an exposition of doctrine—(that, say, of Contributory Negligence)—so full of nice refinements and subtle distinctions that their wits go out of them and they become as men distraught. In fact the plain settle-

ment of a plain matter is too tame for this perverse intelligence. Sir Henry, 'for a calm unfit,' will 'steer too nigh the sands to boast his wit.' It must be a bit of a show case before he will take it in hand ; and then his conduct of it is perfection. It is Puck turned Prospero, and showing in the change how antic and irresponsible a spirit Puck is.

THE RIGHT HON.
SIR GEORGE OTTO TREVELYAN,
BART., M.P.

 NYBODY who wanted to argue that 'Truth is not great, and will not prevail,' might do worse than take Lord Macaulay as an illustration of the thesis he would have to support. He would urge with plausibility that the ingenuity of commentators has not yet unearthed one single statement of historical fact made by that versatile and accomplished nobleman which was moderately accurate, and that, so far as investigation of his sources of information has gone, most of his accounts of persons he liked or disliked politically were either recklessly unjust or deliberately falsified. Then he would point in triumph to the incontrovertible circumstance that Macaulay lived in unbroken prosperity, and died in the odour of adulation; and would further urge that Macaulay's views and assertions about people and events are yearly accepted as gospel by an ever widening circle of readers too idle, too busy, or too careless to peruse the more trustworthy but less brilliant and attractive demolitions of the errors to which the historian's easy-going but whole-hearted partisanship gave currency. Yet the vindicator of the proverb already quoted, if he gave his mind to it, would find, as thought-

ful people always do, that there was something to be said on the other side. He would refuse to the sceptic the liberty of confining his attention to the arbitrarily chosen period of the life of a single human being, and would say that you must take into consideration, on the other side of the balance, the career of the relative who was educated under Lord Macaulay's supervision, and who has undeniable claims to be considered his intellectual heir and nearest personal representative. He would declare that Truth was even now exacting the most horrible vengeance for Macaulay's violations of her sanctity; that the sins of the uncle were being horribly visited on the nephew; and that, though the mills of God had ground slowly, yet they had ground Sir George Trevelyan exceeding small.

It is a rash endeavour to surmise with what felicitous epithet a new Carlyle, were the advent of such a person happily possible, would immortalise the Member for Bridgeton; but if he called him by some such nickname as the Unsurpassable Baronet he would not err on the side of severity. Sir George's career up to the present time certainly supplies an example of a study in degradation to which it would be difficult to find a parallel. His early promise and his mature performance contribute to adorn his present condition with all the fascinations of contrast. As a young man, Sir George enjoyed, in a reasonable degree, all the advantages which civilised life in England has to offer to a person of the male sex. He was rich, he was clever, he could write, he could speak. He had enjoyed a career of distinction at a college which has so good an opinion of itself that its

members hardly ever think it worth while expressly to assert that opinion. He was known as the author of one or two skits in such remarkably entertaining verse that they are still read, and their thirty-year-old jokes are still quoted, with relish at Cambridge. He was by descent and preference a rather advanced and noticeable member of the political party which had the upper hand, and had every prospect of indefinitely maintaining that advantage. He was of good birth and breeding, without being burdened by any of the cares of exalted rank. He was not troubled with the ardent and dissatisfied spirit characteristic of martyrs, heroes, reformers, and uncomfortable people generally. It is really not easy to see what any reasonable person could want which Sir George Trevelyan had not, when he stood upon the threshold of public life, unless it were to be a beautiful young woman : a lot which has its own advantages, but cannot be combined with the *rôle* of fortunate young man.

Fortune continued to smile upon Sir George in a general way until he became Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant upon the murder of his predecessor in 1882. Of course he had his ups and downs. He advocated the abolition of purchase in the army before that step commended itself to the leaders of his party. He stood out of a Liberal Government because he considered the country ripe for the assimilation of the franchise in counties and boroughs before his colleagues did. But these are no more than the diversities which distinguish a young man of spirit who thinks *for* himself from a mere party hack who thinks only *of* himself. During all this period outraged Veracity was grimly biding her time, and

watching how, behind a goodly show of character and independence, the heaped-up favours of fortune were slowly sapping the morals and turning the brain of her destined victim. The fated hour struck, and Sir George went to Ireland. There he performed his duty sufficiently well to call forth the hearty praise of his friends, who were for this purpose the bulk of the two great parties in the State, and to excite the most furious attacks of his enemies. Murderers and other criminals were brought to justice, and Sir George refused to recognise, in the circumstance that their motives were to some extent treasonable as well as predatory, any reason to interfere for their protection from the legal consequences of their misdeeds. Accordingly, he was daily denounced as a bloodthirsty, inhuman monster, thirsting for patriotic gore; as a judicial murderer, corruptly plotting the prostitution of justice; and as the obliging patron of crimes about which it is not necessary to be explicit. In justice to him, it must be added that for a considerable time he went in danger of his life, and that as the head of a family he was exposed to dangers of which his chivalrous assailants did not hesitate to take the fullest advantage.

The revulsion of 1886, which Mr. Gladstone took in his stride, was too much for Sir George Trevelyan. For the second time in his life he resigned his office, and applauded himself for his high principles. He fought his election like a man, and when a person called Brown defeated him by a narrow majority in the Hawick Burghs, which he had represented during the whole of his political life, probably everybody, except Mr. Brown and Mr. Gladstone, was rather sorry. But those who had watched

Sir George's administration in Ireland carefully, who had observed his attitude towards the more superficially respectable of his Nationalist opponents, and had noted with concern his surprising facility for boasting of the improvement in the social life of the country produced by Mr. Gladstone's 'remedial' legislation when it was his business to know that there was in fact no such improvement, had already their misgivings. Only too soon came the justification. It was not in Macaulay's nephew to abide by what he knew and had eloquently explained to be right, unless the party with which his personal interests were bound up abided there with him. In a few months Sir George began to wobble. It was a painful spectacle. Now Gladstonewards and now Truthwards, he oscillated publicly and with increasing violence. There was a moment when it is hard to say whether the Unionists or the Separatists thought less of him. Perhaps neither could think less than the other did. But it was clear from the first on which side of the fence the swaying figure would fall. Truth would have none of him, and the vacancy at Bridgeton decided the matter. In the course of that contest he descended low enough to tell his audience that he, a young, unknown, and poor man—Sir George Trevelyan told men earning 30s. a week that he had once been poor!—had incurred social obloquy by his efforts to abolish purchase in the interest of the masses. He did not at once consummate his surrender by enjoying the personal assistance of the editor of *United Ireland*. Since then he has supported the editor—supported the man who, some few years since, published weekly articles and cartoons charging him with being a judicial murderer and

—what most men would consent to be called judicial murderers in order to avoid ! He says no one ought to remember these little ebullitions of temporary unfriendliness. It is a matter of taste. But it is instructive to note that Mr. O'Brien has never thought it worth while to tender the smallest expression of regret to Sir George Trevelyan. Of course, there is no particular reason why he should, when he has Sir George's support without ; but he has made an apology to the nobleman he used to call 'Foxy Jack,' and the distinction seems invidious.

THE RIGHT HON.
SIR WILLIAM GEORGE GRANVILLE
VERNON HARCOURT,
KNIGHT, M.P., ETC.

HE records of the Vernons and the Harcourts abound in the ore of history. In recent times Archbishop Harcourt is found upholding the traditions of his house and of the hunting-field, and nearly two centuries ago the first Lord Harcourt—who had the distinction of drafting the Treaty of Union between England and Scotland—was ‘among the lawyers the most eloquent orator, and among the orators the most able lawyer.’ In the reign of Edward III., too, a renowned Harcourt changed sides with equal brilliancy and felicity, till at the battle of Crécy—(acting, probably, on defective information as to the chances of the fight)—he deserted to the losing side. But among all the Harcourts and the Vernons all there is none whose career and character will be of greater interest to the philosophic historian than the author of the *Letters on International Law*.

Sprung of a Tory stock sometimes ennobled and always royal (at least since 876), William Vernon Harcourt entered public life on (as it seemed) the probability that

he would follow the footsteps of the first Lord Harcourt, and establish himself—broad-based upon the Premier's will, etc.—upon the woolsack in the due course of political and professional advancement. But probability is one thing, innate genius is another; and it was soon apparent that so tame and tradesmanlike a destiny was not for him. He was Harcourt and he was young, and of course he aimed at political distinction. Scarce deigning to soil his hands with the common emoluments of advocacy, he made himself a noble practice at the parliamentary bar; and having appealed to the great heart of the people as the 'Historicus' of *The Times* and his 'old friend Walter,' in 1858 he offered himself, his conscience, and his theory of epigram to the electorate of Kirkcaldy. But the 'lang toun' would have none of his conscience, none of his theory of epigram, none of himself, and for ten years more the Parliament of Britain and he—he, the sublimation of the Vernons *plus* the Harcourts!—remained in what somebody has called 'the viduity of estrangement.' It was mortifying, but with stupidity the very gods—much less the Harcourts and the Vernons!—do battle in vain. Still, it is understood that seats are to the influential even as adventures are to the adventurous; and when all of you is Vernon excepting what is Harcourt, it is probable that you will sit for somewhere or other in Her Majesty's House of Commons. Thus it was with this particular apologist of Mr. Parnell. He entered Parliament for Oxford, and it needed all the fact that his letters on international law were able, lucid, and extremely interesting to purge his appointment as Professor of that subject in the University of Cambridge of a

certain savour of jobbery. Nothing could prevent the post from being held as a sinecure. And as a sinecure Sir William long continued to hold it, with a shamelessness till then undreamed of even at Cambridge.

The story of his simple, beautiful, accomplished life is fresh in the public mind. He was too intelligent not to show that he had his price, and too critical of principles and men not to know that he was worth it. Everybody remembers how—protesting that Mr. Disraeli was a leader who was proud of the House of Commons and of whom the House of Commons was proud—he was bold and astute enough to bait that other leader to whom he owed his place as Solicitor-General. Well worth remembering, too, is that other leader's vengeance. It has lasted down to present times, as Sir William's entire discrediting alike as politician and as enthusiast will show; but at the moment it took the common form of a burst of oratory. In those days Mr. Gladstone was still somebody; and a weaker man, a less godlike and more human politician, would have died of his reproof. Sir William did not. Mr. Disraeli would none of him, of course; so he waited till he could once more worship at the old, the desecrated, shrine. Also he fought and bickered much with Mr. Morley—Honest John, as some do style him still. If it were not he who 'thanked God'—(when Mr. Gladstone came to grief in 1874)—that 'the reign of earnestness was over,' it ought to have been, for that was undoubtedly his sentiment. At any rate he has described himself as 'one of those miserable Whigs who led an abject and servile life under the tyranny of Mr. Chamberlain'; and the description, like so much that is his,

is worth remembrance and regard. Sir William has been a Whig as he has been everything. He once—(it is said)—proposed to stand as Conservative candidate for Brighton; and though the incident is not authenticated, it is to be hoped, for history's sake, that it is true. Without it Sir William's career lacks perfection, and his political creed is scarce worthy the stamp of absolute catholicity. Whether the wooing of the Brighton wire-pullers was before or after the Battle of the Flowers at Oxford is uncertain and immaterial. It is, happily, undoubted that on every political question Sir William has held and has openly professed at least a couple of changes of opinion. Thus the enthusiast on behalf of the Public Worship Regulation Act now votes for the Disestablishment of the Church of Scotland; the profane derider of the Temperance Alliance is now a Local Optionist and an opponent of compensation; while on every subject connected with Ireland his speeches are a mine of argument and suggestion for the young debaters of both sides; and were it worth anybody's while—(which of course it is not)—to convict this solid Cynthia of the Minute—this 'quick-change *artiste*,' to speak the later slang—of inconsistency, enough could be found in his reported utterances to prove beyond dispute that it is absolutely impossible for him to have perpetrated any one of them. To the Gibbon of the future evolving a theory of Vernon Harcourt only one conclusion is possible; which is, that there were ten Harcourts and about as many Vernons, with at least a score of Vernon Harcourts, all opposed to each other and all Victorian statesmen.

Our hero is not as brave as that ancestor who misjudged his Crécy. When Mr. Forster governed Ireland, and Mr. Parnell's young men were experimentalising with dynamite and surgeons' knives, police protection of Ministers was perfected as a science, and the artist thereof was one Sir William Harcourt, then Home Secretary. None was ever so well police-protected as himself, and it is matter for regret that the part that same experience had in making him a Parnellite cannot be exactly determined now. It is true that he covered himself with glory by the way in which he rushed the Explosives Act through the Commons into law; it is true that he terrorised the youthful assassin by the introduction of the birch; but it is a little unfortunate even for him—with all his inconsistency!—that he should be chiefly remembered as the statesman who put down the timid hare. There might—(one sighs to think) have been some touch some lingering suggestion, of the fellow-feeling that makes men wondrous kind. But police protection is not incentive to the softer virtues; and the hare is vanishing from our midst, while the destroyer, the ex-Minister who should have understood him best, as sympathising with his fearful and timorous nature, is with us still and expects to be Premier.

Sir William has not always been fortunate. His ancestor's mistake at Crécy has not yet been paralleled, but he has sometimes—though rarely, it must be admitted—adopted, or rather enunciated the wrong—which is the unprofitable—policy. His famous figure about the Tories and Parnellite juice was only a few days earlier in time than Mr. Gladstone's first step in the march on Tara's

Halls. But this and his other infelicities have but enabled him to prove his native worth and display the quality and fibre of his peculiar genius. In a month he can—(and does)—forget you a pledge or turn you a coat or profane a sometime peculiar altar with the best of them; and nobody will think the less of him therefor. A conversationalist of some charm, a debater of great assurance and readiness, a lawyer without law, a statesman virgin of policy, a place-man of unparalleled suppleness, he never rats by halves, and in consequence is sometimes useful to the party he adopts. What he may be to-morrow his colleagues neither know nor care; but to-day he works hard in their interest and his own; he is ever anxious to speak; as prompter of the front Opposition bench he is invaluable—to the other side; his assiduity in harassing Mr. Morley with unsolicited hints is the joy of the whole House. Respectably connected, the scion of kings, he aspires in the coming revolution to the part of Philippe-Egalité. His equipment is undeniable; but there is always the possibility that the Plantagenet, unlike the Bourbon, will die a Tory.

EMILE ZOLA.

T fifty M. Zola is even more notorious than famous, and it may truly be said of him, that he has worked for notoriety as others are content to work for fame. All his life long he has been in opposition, and all his life long he has been thrusting forward wherever noise was noisiest and not to be conspicuous was merely impossible. In him a literary talent of uncommon vigour and excellence and a lyric faculty as intense and fervent as has been developed in France since Musset are complicated with an enormous assurance, an irreverence canine in quality and unsurpassable in degree, an almost superhuman incapacity to see more than one thing at a time, which have made his name a byword in art and his books one of the most unpleasant and at the same time one of the least deniable facts in literature. By the greatest contradiction in terms he calls himself a scientific artist; but he is really a lyrist in prose—a lyrist with his nose to the ground and a bitter and determined preference of the pigsty to the ether. He believes himself a disciple of Claude Bernard, and he is simply a man with an irresistible bias towards the manipulation of a certain order of facts and a passion for the study of a certain set of phenomena. He sets himself down ‘naturalist,’ and he

would fain have you believe that nothing is normal but the abominable, that nothing is human that is not bestial and obscene. The result of all which fatuousness—for he is nothing if not absolutely fatuous—is that Zolaism and Sadism are in some sort convertible terms. Sainte-Beuve detected the Sadic note in Eugène Sue; and Sainte-Beuve, with his exquisite delicacy of touch, his incomparable insight into cause and effect, his wonderful sense for the pathology of literature—Sainte-Beuve, in a word, who is very much more nearly the analogue of Claude Bernard than the author of *l'Assommoir* and *la Terre*—Sainte-Beuve, we say, was not deceived. On the contrary, he discerned in *le Juif Errant* and *les Mystères de Paris* the presence of an element which was presently to become the master-quality of French literature. It was of the union of the twin devils Cruelty and Luxury that were born the inventions of Eugène Sue; and that same unnatural conjunction it is which since his time has filled the world with the strange and hideous dreams of Flaubert and Baudelaire and the monstrous fancies of MM. Zola and de Maupassant. Like the original Author of Evil—the Marquis, not his Master—M. Zola is himself a *méridional*: he has that strain of excessiveness, that humour of enormity, that instinct of the gigantic and the abnormal which—M. Daudet tells you—are racial characteristics. They found, he says, a complete expression in Napoleon; and if the bent of M. Zola's mind had been the opposite of what it is, they would have made him an evangelist of purity run mad, and driven him forth into a wilderness of preposterous and inhuman virtue. The contingency is too strange and startling—

(‘too anti-factual,’ as the jargoneer would put it)—to realise. But it might as well have occurred as not, and as well as not M. Zola discoursing of the cardinal virtues might have been exactly as *naturaliste* as M. Zola expatiating on the seven deadly sins is *naturaliste*. Not any more and not any less; but as ecstatic, as extravagant, as gross and peculiar and uncommon on the side of decency as he is uncommon, peculiar, gross, extravagant, and ecstatic to the opposite purpose and in the opposite extreme.

It is said that he once attired a heroine—a *Parisienne* of the most exquisite type and the rarest distinction—in a muslin skirt and a black velvet jacket, and that he did so because he thought that thus and not otherwise do fashion’s queens apparel themselves for the ball. The charge is probably false, but that it was possible is enough to show in how little esteem his ‘realism’—his grip upon life and fact—is held. Worse and more damning still, a number of his admirers, engaged like himself in making French literature the wonder and derision of the world, came forward and protested publicly against his method of ‘getting up’ his materials. The pathologist, they said, the true disciple of Claude Bernard, would only deal with the results of prolonged and intimate research: he would eschew the outcome of divination as the work of that Anti-Scientific Spirit which is modern for Devil; and they for their part declined to accept as serious contributions to the sum of human knowledge a set of documents obviously based on as it were a bowing acquaintance with the truth, even as they refused to consider good topography a series of

sketches of scenery which any one could see with half an eye had been studied through the windows of a railway carriage going at express speed. The work which called forth this remonstrance—(to do him justice, M. Zola treated the whole thing with the utmost insolence of contempt)—was *la Terre*, which is probably the filthiest, as assuredly it is the dullest and the least readable, of all the Rougon-Macquart cycle, and which is in some sort the most violent and the most sordid libel upon France and the French that any Frenchman has so far deemed it patriotic to produce. What is more to the purpose is that it is very bad Zola indeed. In his way the man is an artist. His books—it has been well and acutely said—are short stories gone wrong. For a hundred pages or so he has a trick of being as clever, as strong, as moving—almost—as in *la Défense du Moulin*, which is simply a little masterpiece; and thereafter, his interest exhausted, the artist dead, the pedant in full flourish, the *méridional* exulting in his racial characteristics—thereafter is only the material of notoriousness, the stuff that sets the groundlings gaping while it makes the judicious grieve. There is nothing much better in modern French, for instance, than the beginning of *l'Œuvre*; for there is all the magic of Paris, as Paris seems to him that is young and candid, and has given himself to art, and falls in with love by the wayside, and is happy as only the enamoured artist can be. And the rest of the thing is merely the pedant—the pedant raging stupid and shameless and free: till there comes that curious crisis, the scene between Claude and his wife, and the gorge of the reader heaves for private and

peculiar reasons, and he cannot sufficiently deride the pretensions and the qualifications of a man so deaf and blind and dulled to the essentials of life and character as to deem this libel representative of either, while he cannot choose but sorrow over the artist who gave you those delightful first chapters and yet could decline—all in the name of art, or science, or scientific art, or some such balderdash—on such a simple piece of Sadism as is here. M. Zola, indeed, is an artist bewildered by his ambitions and ruined by his methods. Claude Lantier's picture—something naked in a boat on the Seine against a background of modern Paris—is the type of his own achievement. It is anachronistic in every sense: it is the conflict between lyrism and realism, between the fact and the ideal, between the cerebral tendency and the artistic consciousness; it is the madness of the *méridional* in combat with the sanity of the man of letters; and the victory is with the powers of darkness. M. Zola, in other words, is a splendid yet a shameful failure. It is Lucifer, Star of the Morning, hurled from heaven and nuzzling with ignoble and superb stupidity among the nameless and abominable litter into which he has been hurled.

Stupidity is the word. M. Zola, for all his talent and for all his aims, is essentially stupid. If he were not he would hardly talk of Shakespeare as he talks, and boldly visit the 'Out, vile jelly' of Lear's unnatural daughter with the preposterous encomiums he finds for it. Or take his own *Bouton-de-Rose*, his idea of jovial and buxom farce, or his perversion of *Volpone*—*les Héritiers Rabourdin* he calls it—and ask yourself if work so gross, so dull,

so inexpressibly and coarsely inept, could possibly have been done by other than a stupid man. More flagrant still, perhaps, is that fatiguing and revolting failure, his *Thérèse Raquin*, which could only have proceeded from a writer to whom the A B C of the dramatic convention is merely unintelligible: which as matter of fact did actually proceed from a dramatist presently to offer up his Nana to the public disguised in small-pox by means of an india-rubber mask, in the full conviction that that was 'realism,' emotion, the very essence and primordial material of drama. M. Zola, indeed, is a type of the democracy it is his pride to believe he represents. He is dead to the past and blind to the future; but he is greedy of change in the present, and he honestly—and stupidly—believes the imperfect, one-sided, purely experimental work of which he is capable sufficient for everything. He is (that is to say) essentially a lyrist, and he believes himself a pupil of Claude Bernard; he is nothing if not an idealist, and because he is filthy he believes himself in touch with Nature; he believes himself the heir and successor of Balzac, and he is really the last of Victor Hugo. Such are the delusions of democracy.

GEORGE MEREDITH.

IN dealing with George Meredith it is difficult not to range yourself on one side or the other very openly, and not to utter yourself one way or the other with emphasis. It is not only the public which can seldom give a reason for the faith that is in it: it is also the professional critics and the literary folk accustomed to balance their judgment on their pen, who thus express extreme devotion or absolute impatience and dislike. One notable writer boasts of having read *The Egoist* seven times; and another retorts that he would be seventy and seven times condemned if he read *The Egoist* once. This critic sets the master a little higher than the parent of Lovelace and Miss Howe and on a level with the poet of *The White Devil* and *The Duchess of Malfi*, and to that critic he is only the Malvolio of the novel—a coxcomb to whom the tongue that Shakespeare spake and the art of Fielding and Sir Walter are a kind of Burlington Arcade. One man lauds his wit and humour, and another looks in vain for his wit, nor of his humour can remember anything but the saying of an ancient peasant who could ‘eat hog a solid hower.’ Amid such warring voices, in such an anarchy of conclusions, the humble person who attempts an impartial estimate is sore bested. It will be granted by all, how-

ever, that in a writer who so excites enthusiasm on the one hand and repudiation on the other there must needs be something rare and vigorous, something of the qualities that make the leader of men; and it will further be admitted as a resplendent distinction that among the crowd of persons of taste and understanding who agree to crown Meredith a royal writer, his most resolute partisans are those of his own household—journalists, poets and novelists, students of the art of fiction and practitioners of the noble English tongue.

What excellences, then, give George Meredith his peculiar position among his admirers? To speak of them, to examine them, is to contend with a great *embarras de richesses*. There are plenty nowadays to vote the literature of the Rowdy Boy immortal in itself and the wine of life, the only true elixir, for every one in mental health. But, the Babel of them notwithstanding, the constant value in fiction is the manifestation of human nature—human nature sounded from the lowest even to the very top of its register. What is commonly called ‘character,’—character in action—is the perennially interesting thing, and when to character is added right emotion, then the novel may be called great. Viewed from this point of vantage the work of George Meredith stands fair and full above that of all but the best. What shapes arise as you recall it! Not puppets stuffed and stiff-jointed, not vague and floating shadows, but full-bodied, full-blooded creations, moving in a living world without exaggeration, yet with all the free action of life and instinct with the fire and breath of life! And when they open their mouths and speak, not in combats of wit (of which anon) but more

particularly under the inspiration of emotion, they do not seem so much to utter words as to emit the actual flame of passion. Where in all fiction is there greater stuff than the more poignant scenes in *Rhoda Fleming*? that, for instance, between Dahlia and Edward in the London lodging, and that other in the Kentish farm-house when she rouses from her long apathy and calls upon her sister to bring her lover back? In these is struck the consummate tragic note, hearing which mere mortals bow the head. They have been compared to the good things of Webster, and who shall call the praise excessive? In such moments, even with the best, the literary expression commonly fulfils the well-worn definition of literature as a something 'thrown out' at an object not fully grasped of the writer's consciousness. In these of Meredith's you feel that you listen to the very words that should have been, even if they were not, used; though you do not think of that, because you are caught up and involved and made a party to the conflict. They wring the heart more poignantly than actual, individual experience, for they are life sublimed by passing through an imagination of singular capacity and a nature of uncommon force. And to this end the man's pathos is not less potent than his passion. What for truth and simplicity could be finer than the passage describing the opening of the money-boxes which Mrs. Sumfit and Master Gammon presented to their mistress Rhoda Fleming at a critical season and the discovery of the meagre and painful savings of a lifetime? Not to know this, not to exult in the remembrance of this, is to be dead to literature or ignorant of one of the great effects of modern English speech.

When George Meredith fails—as in Shrapnel, old Antony Hackbut, Mr. Raikes, and the like—he fails prodigiously: not trailing clouds of glory but ruining into avalanches of sawdust. But the best of his characters reveal an amazing insight into human nature and a knowledge wide and deep of the springs of human action. His men—(one thinks of Richmond Roy and his ancient enemy the Squire, of ‘Old Mel’ and Evan Harrington, of Farmer Eccles and Robert Armstrong, of Sir Everard Romfrey and Vernon Whitford and Sir Lukin Dunstane, of Mr. Pericles and Barto Rizzo and Young Crossjay)—are great; but his women are intoxicating. Meredith’s knowledge of ‘the concrete Unknowable’ is as wide and true as Shakespeare’s own. Excepted (for reasons) that Divinity of Farce, the prodigious Sarah Gamp, in all literature there are but three nurses sprung direct from the roots of human nature; and these are the Nurse in *Æschylus*, the Nurse in *Romeo and Juliet*, and Mrs. Berry in *Richard Feverel*; and the last is the wisest and greatest of the three. To enumerate all the noble, true, gentle, exquisite, adorable, and completely womanly and scheming women whom Meredith has realised would be delightful, but is not to be thought of here. Yet what memories are stirred by the mere mention of such names, on the one hand, as the Sisters Fleming, Lucy Feverel, Renée and Rosamond Culling, Sandra Belloni, Cecilia Halkett, Rose Jocelyn; and, on the other, the Sisters Pole (those living epitomes of the Fine Shades and the Nicer Feelings), the Countess De Saldar de Sancorvo, Mrs. Boulby, and the admirable Chump!

His passion ravishes, and his pathos melts; you would

like his good men for friends and neighbours and the successes among his women for sweethearts and wives: he is not pre-eminently a humourist, but he sometimes makes you laugh; and if he hath a devil of wit and would liefer die than submit to exorcism, his wisdom (which is neither of the ascetic nor of the worldling but of the man who commands the secret of both) instructs, enlightens, even fortifies. As for genius,—it is recorded of Thackeray that as he sat writing that immortal scene of Becky and the Marquis and the avenging Rawdon, at a certain instant of creation he slapped his hand upon the table, and said he ‘By —— that’s genius!’ Well, such instants are common in Meredith, and when a man can have all these differences in an author, what more can he want for his amusement and delight, what more for his reproof and instruction? That is so true that one blushes (like the recording Angel) as one writes it down. Yet ‘Why,’ the pensive reader may demand to know, ‘why are Lucy Desborough and Clara Middleton not the queens of millions instead of She-Who-Must-be-Obeyed and the Rival Barmaids of Zu-Vendis? Why do some refuse to read your Meredith at all, while others who would like to read lose patience with him, and depart from him, and will none of him any more?’ The question is pertinent and shrewd; and to say that they who ignore their Meredith are the thirty millions (more or less) who are ‘mostly fools,’ and who if they tried could no more understand him than they can understand Shakespeare or the Bible—(because writing is as little for them as painting)—is to say this in reply were to be more literary than literature. Nor, as regards those others who try

but turn impatiently away, is it enough to advance that they do so because they are impatient, or to remark that reading has got to be done at such a racing pace that shades of meaning and subtleties of style are now of no avail. Balzac complained that an author might spend a day in turning and polishing a paragraph which his reader would fly over in a second and forget as soon as passed; and Balzac, on whose work the trick of elaboration lies heavy as frost and deep (almost!) as night, had reason to know what he was talking about. His case is on all fours with that of the master of *The Tragic Comedians*. There is a special difficulty in Meredith's style, a difficulty which even his devotees find hard to overcome. It is for the most part not a fine, soft, pliant covering for his thought but a highly-wrought cloth of gold (or tinsel), stiff and sparkling with jewels (which are all too often paste). Thus are manifested the self-consciousness and the coxcombry of the nature of the man: that he is seldom content to go abroad so to say in honest homespun or even in decent broadcloth; but to be happy he must constantly array himself in this costly and most painful wear. It is the very essence of the dandy—so Baudelaire has told us—that he lives before his mirror; and, now that Barbey d'Aurevilly is dead, George Meredith is the Last Dandy.

It is not for nothing—believe us, it is not for nothing—that he is the parent of Melchizedek Harrington and Richmond Roy; and the fact remains that we cannot have him without a world of curious embroideries and strange, magnificent, and baffling suits. We have equalled him with Webster, we have gone the length of comparing

him to Shakespeare ; and after that it can hurt nobody to hint that he has it in him to vie with Foppington and to sympathise with Fastidious Brisk. Certain it is that he is nothing if not a person of wit, and that a common effect of his appearance in that character is (as it were) of damp fireworks and incongruous and unwieldy suits. But the style is of the man, and we cannot have our Meredith in any other guise than he willeth ; and on this question he would give points to the hero of *The Egoist*, even his own Sir Willoughby Patterne. It is a pity, but so have the gods ordained ; and instead of grumbling because our Meredith wears so curious and unusual a coat (a coat in which it is hard to embrace him), the best is to be forever thankful that we have a Meredith at all.

APPENDIX.

MR. SPURGEON'S POLITICS.

[To the Editor of *The Scots Observer*.]

25th June 1890.

SIR,—I have read with interest the by no means unkindly sketch of Mr. Spurgeon which appears in *The Scots Observer*. There is, however, one omission which I desire to point out, and that is the absence of any reference to the great stand which he made against the Home Rule Bill of Mr. Gladstone. His action thereon is thoroughly characteristic of the intense honesty of the man, to which you pay a deserved tribute, and perhaps did more than anything else to turn the votes of so many Dissenters against the Gladstonian party in 1886.

His opinion as to the criminal folly of Mr. Gladstone's policy remains unchanged, and when the proper time comes I have no doubt his influence will be exerted as before in favour of the maintenance of the Union and in opposition to the policy which would hand over to the National League the lives and liberties of our loyal fellow-subjects in Ireland.—I am, etc.,

UNIONIST.

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